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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

MISSIONARY METHODS OF THE RELIGIONS IN THE EARLY ROMAN EMPIRE

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CHAPTER I

THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES

The Mystery Religions in General

The mystery religions had a long and checkered history. They flourished in the Mediterranean world for over two thousand years. Concerning some of them we know almost nothing, concerning others more, but concerning none as much as we would like to know. This is due chiefly to the fact that the very core of these mystery religions was and has remained a religious mystery until this day. None but the initiated knew, and they were not allowed to tell.

The mystery religions satisfied the religious longings of a great number of people and filled a pressing need for a personal religion, that is for a religion, which cared for the individual as such. Some of the mystery cults were able to fill that need better than others, and as a consequence they had greater success, expanded faster and farther, and lived on longer.

The mystery religions were not a uniform entity. They differed in many points as to their form, belief, and practice. But they all had a few traits in common which justify us in classifying them all as mystery religions. These traits were:
(1) They all were mysteries. All of them had secret rites, secret beliefs, and secret practices, which the neophytes were not allowed to reveal; (2) they all made use of symbols: blinding lights and dense darkness, sacramental acts and liturgies, allegory and myths; (3) they were all religions of redemption, and they professed to be able to procure forgiveness of sin, remove the estrangement between man and God, and secure for man a blissful immortality; (4) they all made claim to be in possession of a system of gnosis, which would satisfy man's longing for God and give him a knowledge of the unknown; (5) they all appealed primarily to the emotions, through symbols, drama and myths; (6) they all exhibited eschatological interests, having to do with issues after this earthly life; (7) they all catered to the religious

need of the individual. They were personal religions. Men entered them not by accident of birth, but by a free choice and a religious re-birth; (8) they all took on the character of cosmic religions, and developed cosmic interests, culminating in active missionary propaganda.[1]

The mystery religions with which we will have to do may be grouped according to their origin, in Greek Mystery Religions, and Oriental Mystery Religions. The Greek Mystery Religions were essentially European in origin, but they had also acquired a considerable Asiatic element by contact with the Oriental Mysteries in Asia Minor.

When the mysteries entered the Graeco-Roman world, they found a soil well prepared. The state religions of Greece and Rome had become cold and prosaic and formal. There was very little in them that appealed to the senses, the intellect, or the conscience. They had become merely the tools of the government for the control of the people. They did not aim to satisfy the religious need of the individual. The mystery religions supplied the need which was lacking in the old religions.

It will not be possible to include in our study all the minor mystery religions, that made their appearance in the Graeco-Roman world for longer or shorter periods. That would take us too far afield and yield little result. We know too little about these cults, and what we are able to gather about their missionary methods is practically nil. As a proper and necessary background and setting for our study of the missionary methods of the mystery religions we propose to give a rapid survey of their origin, development, doctrine, and territorial expansion.

The Origin and Spread of the Eleusinian Mysteries

By far the best known and the most characteristic of the Greek Mysteries were the rites celebrated at Eleusis in honor of the goddess Demeter and her daughter Persephone. The origin of these rites goes back before the arrival in Greece of the conquering tribes from the north, which were called Hellenes. The Eleusinian cult goes back to the Mycenaean age and very probably it goes back to the Prehistoric Period. Archeology has uncovered concrete Mycenaean remains. In the excavations of recent years, a Mycenaean megaron was discovered beneath the mystery hall.[2]

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[1] S. Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), pp. 39-75.

Eleusis was a little Attic town on the fertile Rharian plain, thirteen miles west of Athens, over against Salamis. From prehistoric times the cereal goddess, Demeter, had been worshipped by that agricultural community and certain rites celebrated, supposed to increase the fertility of the soil.

In the so called "Homeric Hymns to Demeter,"[3] one of the earliest and most valuable documents for the study of the Eleusinian Mysteries, there is narrated the story of the carrying away of Persephone, while she was gathering flowers in a meadow, by the ruler of Hades. Demeter refused to be consoled for her loss. Frenzied with grief, she rushed about the earth, torch in hand, nine days in search of her lost daughter, neither eating nor drinking. Finally she came to the "Maiden Well of Fragrant Eleusis." There she rested and was welcomed by the daughters of Celeus, who escorted her to their father's house. Here she dwelt for a time and finally broke her fast. Zeus had a full knowledge of the whole affair, but showed partiality for his brother.

In her resentment against Zeus, Demeter refused to aid in the production of grain from the soil. As a consequence men received no crops and the gods no offerings. Men would have perished from the earth had not Zeus intervened as mediator. He arranged it so that mother and daughter should live together on earth for eight months of the year; the remainder of the year, four months, Persephone was to spend in the Underworld.

The understanding of the Eleusinian Mysteries depends on a correct understanding of this myth. The fact that the Maiden dwells for two-thirds of the year in the upper world and one-third in the nether is manifestly connected with vegetation. Demeter is the goddess of vegetation, but not of vegetation in general. Philologists disagree as to whether the syllable Δή (De) signifies earth or grain. The cult practice is decisive. Demeter presides at the threshing and at the autumn sowing. She is the "Cereal Mother."

The climatic conditions in Greece will help us to interpret this myth. In that country grain is sown in October. The crops sprout immediately, and they grow during our winter months. Snow is extremely rare at Eleusis, and soon melts away. The crops ripen and are harvested in May and threshed in June. Then there is a time of four months, from the threshing in June to the Autumn sowing in October, during which the fields are desolate. They are burned in the sun, and not a green stalk is seen on them. This is the time when the "Cereal Maiden" is absent from the earth. She is absent during the hot summer months, when the earth is scorched and the fields bare. Nothing grows on earth, when she is down in the Underworld. Then in October, the silos are opened and the seed for sowing is brought up. It was at this time the ascent of Persephone took place, and she was united with her mother until the threshing time in June. At the time of the ascent of the "Cereal Maiden" from the Underworld, in October, the Elusinian Festivals took place.[4]

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[2] Martin P. Nilsson, Greek Popular Religion (New York: Columbia University, 1940), p. 46.

[3] Sikes and Allen, Homeric Hymns (London, 1904); Lang, Homeric Hymns (New York, 1899).

The original rites at Eleusis had to do with the sustenance of men, living on earth. When the Hellenes arrived in Greece, they took over the ancient rites, developed them, and added to them, in order to make them serve their needs and purposes. By degrees the old tribal vegetation ritual coalesced with the anthropomorphic religion of the Greeks and was made to include not only life on earth, but also life after death, and man's relation to the powers of the nether world. In the myth of Eleusis there is a poignant reflection of human experience mirroring the sorrows, the joys, and the hopes of mankind. The great ravisher of men is death. Man has ever loved and lost, but the hope of reunion with the loved ones, he has seldom lost.

The Eleusinian Mysteries were originally tribal in character, open only to the members of the tribe. But after the political fusion of Eleusis with Athens, the local barriers were broken down. The powerful city state of Athens took over the cult as its own and brought it under state control. The Mysteries now lost their local exclusiveness and took on a Pan-Hellenic character. Eleusis henceforward became a national sanctuary, a national shrine. The door of entrance continued to be initiation and rebirth for all alike. The state never quite relinquished its hold over it. The state exercised its control over it, through the high priest, always chosen from the Eumolpidae family.

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[4] Martin P. Nilsson, "Die Eleusinischen Gottheiten," in Archiv Für Religionswissenshaft, XXXII (1935), 79-141; cf. also an article in Archiv Für Religionswissenshaft by Otto Weinreich, XXXIII, XXXIV (1936, 1937), 156.

Next the Eleusinian Mysteries enlarged their scope and appealed to the whole Hellenic world. The only conditions imposed upon the aspirants of initiation were two: purity from actual stain, and possession of Hellenic speech. Women and children were admitted too. Women were ordinarily confined to their homes and seldom went outdoors. But they partook regularly in the festivals and sacrifices at Eleusis. The festival of Thesmophoria was reserved entirely for women, and men were excluded. At this festival they prayed for fertility, for themselves and for the fields.[5] Children were admitted, through initiation, both into the Eleusinian and the Bacchic Mysteries, and were supposed after death to go straight to the Eleusinian fields.[6]

Romans and barbarians were also admitted, the latter under condition, that they ceased to be barbarians. Persians were not welcomed, after the Persian wars, when the feeling of hatred ran high.[7] This may have been caused by the fact that Eleusis was partly destroyed by the Persians. It was afterwards restored to its former glory.

Slaves were also admitted to full membership into the Eleusinian Mysteries. This is now a well established fact. Among many other evidences, we have a highly interesting Fragment in Greek from the comic poet Theophilus. This Fragment is very suggestive in another line too, which we will presently discuss. A certain slave, refusing to leave his former master, is soliloquizing with himself saying:

"Καιτοι τι φημι; και τι δρᾶν βουλεύομαι;
προδοὺς ἀπιεναι τον ἀγαπητὸν δεσποτην,
τον τροφέα, τον σωτῆρα, δι᾽, ὅν εἶλον νόμους,
Ἑλληνας, ἔμαθον γράμματ᾽ ἐμυήθην θεοῖς;"[8]

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[5] Pausanias viii. 13.

[6] Franz Cumont, Afterlife in Roman Paganism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922), p. 138 ff.

[7] Victor Magnien, Les Mystères d'Eleusis (Paris: Payot, 1929), p. 101.

[8] Meineke, Poetarum Comicorum Graecorum Fragmenta, p. 627. An English translation of the Greek text would be: "Indeed, what shall I say? And what shall I do? After I have gone away and left my beloved Master, the nourisher, the Savior, by whom I have learnt the laws of the Greeks, and letters. Have I not been initiated to the gods?"

Victor Magnien, professor at the University of Toulouse, in his book, Les Mystères d'Eleusis, says, in regard to this Greek text:

> Ce texte nous prouve que l'ancien esclave, une fois initie n'est plus un veritable esclave, mais un homme libre et cultive qui reste pres de son maitre parce qu'il lui doit de la reconnaissance et aussi peut-être parce qu'il trouve chez lui une vie plue facile.[9]

According to Magnien this text proves that an ancient slave, once initiated into the mysteries, ceased to be a slave in reality, but was a free and cultured man, who continued to stay on with his former master out of gratitude to him, and may be also because he finds that life with him is easier. Magnien continues:

> Thus the initiate cannot be a slave. If he was before initiation, he ceases to be one by the act of initiation itself. Since he has now entered into the family of the gods, he becomes the brother and the equal of all the initiates.[10]

Manumission of slaves took place in the temples of all the mysteries, by paying a ransom, or selling themselves to the gods. This made the slave in name, the slave of the god, but in actuality it made him a freed-man. In the Eleusinian mysteries, it would seem, that the very act of initiation constituted an act of manumission. We know from other sources that initiation into the mysteries was, at times at least, quite an expensive matter and could not be afforded by poor men.

The Eleusinian Mysteries enjoyed greater privileges than any other mystery cult. Next to it came the Isiac Mysteries. In their native lands, Greece and Egypt, these two cults enjoyed practically the same privileges as the state religions, and held the same status. The Eleusinian Mysteries were so highly esteemed in Greece that when the great Festival came around, wars ceased between the warring city-states, in order to enable friend and foe to participate in these festivals. It would seem, therefore, that when a slave was admitted into the Eleusinian Mysteries he automatically became a free man. He could leave his old master, and he could stay on and work for him, if he so desired. The choice rested entirely with the freed man himself.

There are certain indications that when a slave was initiated into the Isiac Mysteries the initiation had very much the same effect as in the Eleusinian Mysteries.[11] But we still lack definite evidences. The other mysteries had not the same status, as the Eleusinian and the Isiac had in their native lands.

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[9] Victor Magnien, op. cit., p. 103.

[10] Ibid.

The Greek Fragment is interesting in still another aspect, bearing upon the moral attitude of the initiated. *Noblesse oblige* seems to be in his mind, when he says: "I have been initiated to the gods," or probably better, "Have I not been initiated to the gods?" I am one with the family of gods. I cannot possibly commit an act of ungratefulness toward my former master, who has treated me so excellently. This would then be an added testimony of the elevating influence of the Mysteries upon the moral life of the neophytes.

The Eleusinian Mysteries are the highest and the finest bloom of Greek popular religion. As to the real contents of the Mysteries, we can only guess. The silence enforced upon the *Mystae* has been well kept, almost too well to suit us. We possess a knowledge of certain preliminary rites, which were not so important that it was forbidden to speak of them. In regard to the central rites, belonging to the grade of *epopteia*, our knowledge extends only to the general outline. We know that there were things said, things done, and things shown, but we do not know what these things were.[12] But we may be quite certain that the rites consisted not in rites performed by the *Mystae*, but in seeing something that was shown to them. This is repeated again and again from the "Homeric Hymns to Demeter" onward, and it is proved by the name of the highest grade, *epopteia*. The name of the high priest, ἱεροφάντης (Hierophant), "one that shows sacred things," indicates that his chief duty was to show some sacred things. Words probably accompanied the showing, but the showing, and not the words, was the chief and culminating act of the mysteries.

Greek and Roman writers are almost unanimous in lauding the blessings conferred by the Mysteries. The Athenian orator said: "Those who have this initiation possess sweeter hopes in regard to death and the whole of life."[13] Pindar and Sophocles re-echoed the same thought: "Thrice happy they who go to the world below, having seen these mysteries; to them alone is light there, to all others there is misery."[14] Cicero expresses the view, that Greece had produced nothing better than the Mysteries of Eleusis, not only in the ordering and civilizing of life, but in regard to the furnishing of a good hope in death. "In the mysteries we learn not only to live happily, but to die with fairer hope."[15]

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[11] Hugo Gressmann, *Tod und auferstehung des Osiris* (Leipzig: Hinrichssche Buchhandlung, 1923), p. 24.

[12] Martin P. Nilsson, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

[13] Isocrates *Panegyricus*. 29. 22.

The influence of the Eleusinian Mysteries was widespread in the Graeco-Roman world. Though definitely localized at Eleusis, this cult influenced rites that were celebrated elsewhere. Eleusis was the mother of them all, and the glory and pattern of them all. None of the numerous branches ever aspired to the same honor and renown as the great Eleusinian mother-sanctuary.

We find branches of the Eleusinian Mysteries in Greece proper, Magna Graecia, Asia Minor, Italy, and in the islands of the Mediterranean. Demeter Eleusinia was worshipped in the Arcadian city of Pheneus,[16] in Ionia, at Ephesus and Mycale.[17] According to an inscription (third century A. D.) a mystery of Demeter flourished at Lerna in Argolis,[18] and the hierophant in charge was the son of an Athenian priest. Pausanias vouches for the statement that Megalopolis in Arcadia and Celeae, near Phlius, each had an "initiation mystery of Demeter," in which the proceedings were conducted "in imitation of those at Eleusis."[19] There are further records that Demeter Eleusinia was worshipped in Boeotia and Laconia, on the Greek mainland, and in Crete and Thera, among the Greek islands, and at Aigila,[20] where the ceremonies were celebrated by women, who carried daggers, and spindles, and torches. At Naples, in Italy, mysteries in honor of Demeter were celebrated after the Attic fashion.[21] Eleusinian mysteries were celebrated at Thebes,[22] Messina,[23] and at Crete, et cetera. There was a widespread interest in the Demeter-cult in the Graeco-Roman world, and the influence of the Eleusinian Mysteries was literally empire-wide during the early imperial period.

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[14] Pindar _Fragment Thren_. 8.

[15] Cicero _De Legibus_. ii. 14.

[16] Pausanias viii. 15. 1.

[17] Strabo 633 and Herodotus ix. 97.

[18] _Corpus Inscriptionum Atticarum_ iii, No. 718.

[19] Pausanias ii. 14. 1; viii. 31. 7.

[20] Pausanias iv. 17. 1.

During the period of the early Roman Empire some very famous non-Greeks showed their deep interest in the Mysteries at Eleusis. Emperor Augustus himself was initiated at Eleusis, in 21 B. C., and according to Suetonius, he gave signal proof of his reverence for the mysteries.[24] Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, among the Roman Emperors, were also initiated at Eleusis. Nero failed to gain admission. The fact that the first citizens of the Roman Empire sought membership in the Eleusinian cult is a striking proof of its great influence. The epitaph of an Eleusinian priestess mentions with pride that she set the crown upon the imperial heads, as they participated in the solemn rites.[25]

Fanatical monks, in the train of Alaric, destroyed the sanctuary of Eleusis in 396 A. D.

In our discussion of the propaganda work carried on by different religions in the Early Roman Empire our procedure will be to discuss first some "Attractive Features," stressed by the propagandists, and secondly the "Actual Missionary Methods" employed. These "Attractive Features" cannot be classified under "Missionary Methods." But they were attractive features to men outside the cult and as such much stressed by the propagandists. The separating line will sometimes be difficult to draw as they occasionally overlap.

Attractive Features in the Eleusinian Mysteries

(1) The Mysteries appealed to the national consciousness of the people. The Eleusinian Mysteries, being both a national cult and a mystery religion, were in a position to make an appeal

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[21] Statius Silvae iv. 8.50.

[22] Corp. Inscr. Att. 3. 718.

[23] Pausanias iv. 33. 4.

[24] Harold R. Willoughby, Pagan Regeneration (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), p. 40.

[25] Eph. Arch. 1885, p. 150.

all their own.[26] No other Mysteries enjoyed such a privileged position or could make such a sweeping appeal. These Mysteries were essentially Greek in origin and development and had become a bond of union between Greek city-states and Hellenic speaking peoples. Nationalism can easily be aroused and worked up to white heat, especially during times of national dangers and foreign threats. The fusion of a common religion with a common national consciousness may become a mighty factor in the life of a people. The authorities of Eleusis, that were responsible for shaping the destinies of the Mysteries, knew how to make the most of this, and to make it their strong ally.

Here at the cult-place of the gods and the national shrine people met. The Mysteries afforded them an opportunity for assembling and feasting and conversing with friends and people from other parts of the land. Religious emotionalism and national feeling made of the Eleusinian Mysteries the most popular of all religions and of Eleusis the sacred, national shrine. It was an honor to be an Athenian, it was an honor to be a citizen of Sparta, but it was a double honor to be a member of a brotherhood that included them both, that was Pan-Hellenic in its constitution.

(2) The Mysteries appealed to the sanctity and glory of Eleusis. The cult-place of the Eleusinian Mysteries was a history in miniature of Greece. Here had their forefathers worshipped from time immemorial and found religious satisfaction. Generation after generation had added to its glory and sanctity. Grecian and Roman writers treated the other popular religious rites with mirth and scorn, but they always mentioned the Eleusinian Mysteries with the deepest reverence. There was no stigma attached to being a member of the Eleusinian Mysteries; on the contrary it was an honor.

Eleusis belonged to the Greeks as a race. The several city-states were constantly warring against one another. But when the time drew near for the celebration of The Great Mysteries, the warring states proclaimed a truce for a few months, in order to enable as many as possible to attend.[27] There at Eleusis enemies became friends and the master and his slave equals. Mighty Eleusis!

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[26] S. Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, pp. 61-62.

[27] Martin P. Nilsson, Greek Popular Religion (New York: Columbia University, 1940), p. 99.

Glorious Eleusis! It was the Jerusalem of the Greeks. They spake of it with bated breath and with awe and reverence. There the gods dwelt, and there their ancestors had experienced a rebirth and acquired immortality. There the crowds go. Come let us go down to Eleusis! Eleusis, what an appeal to a historically-minded, religious Greek!

(3) They appealed to the desire for the good life on earth. With a considerable number of men the spiritual need does not seem to play a very important part in their lives. But very few men may be found, to whom the good life on earth does not make a very strong appeal. Food and drink, money and clothing, friendship and pleasure are urgently sought for. Anything supposed to help provide for these needs and ensure the good life on earth, is eagerly grasped at. The agricultural population of Greece had come to know, that they were dependent upon powers, over which they had no control whatsoever, for a bountiful harvest. The "Corn Mother," and the "Corn Maiden" were in control of these powers, and they were worshipped and entreated at Eleusis. They were exceedingly friendly to men, and they cared for the individual and his need. It was therefore only logical, that all classes and conditions of men turned eagerly to Eleusis for these blessings, upon which their life on earth was dependent. At the close of the great Festival at Eleusis, they emptied of water some vessels, calling to the sky to give them rain and to the earth to yield her increase.

(4) They pointed out a way to get rid of the fear of a future punishment. That fear of a future punishment was a very common phenomena is evident from the following quotation. The philosopher Democrites says: "Many people, who do not know that human nature is dissolved in death, but who know that they have committed much wrong, live constantly in fear and anxiety, composing lying fables concerning the time after death."[28] And in his great work, The Republic, Plato makes the aged Kêphalos say, that a man who sees the hour of death approach him, is seized by fright and begins to think about things that had not troubled him before. For while the myths that are told of the underworld, according to which he that has committed wrongs in this world will

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[28] Frag. 297 in H. Diels, Die Fragmente der Vor-Sokratiker (Berlin, 1934 and 1937), II, 206-7.

be punished in that world, seemed ridiculous to him hitherto, now his soul is anxious, for they may be true. He is disquieted and he makes up his account, considering whether he has done wrong to anybody. If he finds that he has committed many unjust actions, he is filled with alarm; he often leaps up from his bed in sleep as children do, and he lives in fear.[29]

The terrible condition in the nether world was pictured in the brightest colors. There was a hell with ever-flowing mire, in which lie those who in life have committed wrong to guest-friends, or fraud, or perjury, or who have beaten their fathers, or who have neglected to be initiated into the Mysteries.

That initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries was supposed to be a purification from sin and a security against future suffering, and an assurance of a blissful immortality with the gods, the following quotations will show: "O, thrice blessed those mortals," says Sophocles, "who after contemplating these mysteries have gone down to Hades; to them only there shall be life; for the others all shall be suffering."[30] And Plato says: "Those who go down to Hades without having taken part in the initiation of the mysteries shall be plunged into the mire; on the contrary those who have been purified and initiated shall live with the gods."[31]

What a strong appeal to those fearful of a future retribution! Here was a simple, effective means to avoid a future calamity. Be initiated, join the Mysteries, and your future salvation is assured!

(5) They appealed to human curiosity of the mysterious, the hidden, the secret. The mystical has a strong appeal to many. Man is so constituted that he is eager to explore the unknown and discover the secrets. It is an established fact that the existence of secret societies, or closed, in which certain teachings or certain practices are transmitted to selected, trusted persons, appeals to a very general tendency in human nature. Plutarch says:

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[29] Plato Republic.i. 330 ff.

[30] Sophocles, Fragment 348, Edition Didot.

[31] Plato Phaedo. 13.

"The secrecy itself augments the value to those who understand. A too obvious thing discourages him who is being taught."[32] Our Universe is a mysterious universe. Life itself is one of the greatest mysteries of all, especially things connected with birth and death. Is there a life after death? If so what kind of life? The Mysteries claimed to know many of these secrets. They knew about life in the nether world. They knew of a future retribution and how to avoid it. They knew how to circumvent a dreaded thing and how to obtain a happy immortality. All depended upon the mystic formula of initiation. What was this formula? How was it done? There was no way of finding out, as no one dared to tell you. The only thing was to be initiated yourself. Man's curiosity was aroused, his future destiny was at stake, how could he stay out?

This appeal to human curiosity of the mystical, the hidden, the secret, was not something peculiar to the Eleusinian Mysteries. They had it in common with all the other Mysteries. This appeal was the same in them all.

(6) They appealed to the Equality and Brotherhood of those initiated. Outside the sacred walls of Eleusis, where could such equality be found? Here the master had ceased to command and his slave to fear and tremble. Here they met as equals and as brothers. What an experience for a slave! He had probably known liberty once, but had been captured in war and sold as a slave. Within these walls of sanctity he was again a man among men. The authorities, the bourgeoisie, the slave-owners were not upon a pedestal any longer. They had come down willingly, and enjoyed their new-found liberty which custom and office had denied them earlier. The great, among men, had become ordinary men, and the downtrodden had been elevated. Here the gods of Eleusis were in authority. What the law of Greece had been unable to accomplish, the religion of Eleusis had done. The Eleusinian Mysteries had become a truce-maker in times of war, a levelling and equalizing force in a world of inequalities, a moral influence in an immoral society. Rich and poor, slave and master, young and old, men and women met here upon an equal basis. The gods had set them free and made them into one large brotherhood. Eleusis was the rising sun for the enslaved, the guiding star for the law-makers,

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[32] Plutarch De Vita et Poesi Homeri. 92.

and an inspiration to all.

Missionary Methods of the Eleusinian Mysteries

It may seem rather strange to speak of missionary methods in a religion which had practically no doctrine to propagate and no missionary organization to do the work. But even though the Eleusinian Mysteries had no dogma to propagate and no travelling missionaries to do the work, they were nevertheless not lacking in missionary methods. They may have been more subtle and harder to define, but very effective in their workings. In order to satisfy every need and every longing in the human heart, their missionary methods of appeals had been most carefully worked out. They were elastic enough, so that they could be accommodated to the ever changing needs in an ever changing society. There was no difficult doctrine to learn and no elaborate moral code to conform to. Come, look, and be saved! That was their whole creed in a nutshell. But the benefits derived from being initiated into the Mysteries were so enormous and so evident to all, that they could very well be allowed to make their own appeals, without any preacher or missionary, only supplemented by the testimonies of those who had experienced in their own lives the blessings of initiation. The Eleusinian Mysteries appealed to all kinds and conditions of men.

(1) They made excellent use of the religious experience of the neophytes. There can be no doubt that many neophytes had a real religious experience, call it regeneration, or rebirth, or any other name. This fact is so evident, that it cannot possibly be explained away. The Eleusinian Mysteries had worked out an excellent technique that would bring about such an experience. For ten days the initiates had prepared themselves by fasting, they had been baptized with the baptism of purification in the salt sea, and they had marched in the procession from Athens to Eleusis, they had said their prayers, and now they had arrived at the sacred Eleusis, the home of the gods. Their expectation had been raised to the very highest. Something might happen in any minute. Their emotions went as the waves of the sea. These four days spent with the gods, at sacred Eleusis, really changed their lives. They went back to their homes and their occupation with a feeling that something had taken place in their inner life. Did it happen during the Passion Play, when they grieved with the god-

dess in her grief, or was it when they partook with the goddess in her jubilant exultation, when the "Corn Maiden," her daughter, was finally found and reunited with her mother?

These people were a living testimony to the fact that they had been reborn in some mysterious way. They were not allowed to tell what they had heard and seen, or what it was that caused their experience, but the experience itself they were allowed to refer to. Many, unquestionably, went away and for their sakes believed in the Mysteries.

(2) They made a strong appeal by the impressiveness of the public ceremonials of the preliminary rites. The public ceremonials in connection with the initiatory rites purposely aimed at influencing people. It is true, that what the public was permitted to see had to do with the preliminary rites only. What mattered most, the chief thing, was entirely hid from their views. But what they had been allowed to see and hear of the purificational rites, the long and solemn processions, the sacred emblems, carried veiled in the processions, the music and the songs, and the general enthusiasm exhibited by all, made an indelible impression upon them and gave them a foretaste of what must be beyond, within easy reach, if they but made up their mind. At the gates of Eleusis they parted company with those who were candidates for initiation. Those went in through the gates, and they were left outside, alone with their thoughts and impressions. They were left in doubt as to what the real mysteries were. But they knew that these were to change the lives and destinies of those who had been initiated.

After the four days of initiatory rites at Eleusis were over, and the neophytes were homeward-bound, their enthusiasm and exultation knew no bounds. Some of them had undergone a certain religious experience, others had seen what they did not expect to see, but all of them had the feeling, that they now in a special way were in communion with their gods, and that they had done what they could to ensure a safe passage into the next world and a happy immortality there. We cannot possibly know how many of the bystanders from one year were in the procession the next, or how many of the neophytes had made their decision as onlookers the preceding year. But their number was, surely, not small. The public ceremonials had done, what they were intended to do, viz. impressed the outsiders and incited them to come within the sacred walls and enjoy the same experiences.

The Eleusinian Mysteries made a strong appeal to all classes and conditions of men. The success of their missionary methods has hardly ever been equalled.

CHAPTER II

THE DIONYSIAC MYSTERIES

There are two Greek Mystery Religions, the Dionysiac and the Orphic, that stand in a category all by themselves. They may best be described as occupying a place between the Oriental Mystery Religions on one hand and the Eleusinian Mysteries on the other. The first group came from Asia and Africa; the second group originated in Greece proper. Not only their origins were different, but the very mysteries themselves differed, in respect to doctrine, practice, and missionary methods. They varied so much that it was thought best to separate them from the rest and subject them to a special study.

The Origin and Spread of the Dionysiac Mysteries

The Dionysiac Mysteries hail from Thrace. The Thracians were a wild tribe, as yet untouched by the on-coming civilization from the south. These mysteries were particularly the state religion of these northern tribes, including Macedonia. When the Thracians migrated to Asia Minor, particularly to Phrygia, and overthrew the First Hittite Empire, about 1200 B. C., they took with them their gods.[1] There they came in contact with other mysteries of the Oriental type and were influenced by them.

The Dionysiac Mysteries entered Greece from two sides. They came overland by the direct route, and they came by sea from Phrygia, via the Greek colonies in Asia Minor. On a great number of paintings, Dionysus is represented as sitting in a boat, and in processions, he is often pictured as enthroned in a boat and placed at the head of the procession. This may point to his original coming to Greece by boat.

The new god invaded Greece in mighty waves in company with maenads and satyrs and a wild, ecstatic following. The religion was new to Greece, but many of the elements and ideas incorporated into the Dionysian cult were old and familiar to the Minoan-Mycenaean civilization. The Greek conquerors had forced old ideas and customs underground, but they had not been able to extinguish them. When the new religion came, they flared up again. This is undoubtedly one of the explanations for the rapid expansion of the new cult in Greece.[2]

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[1] Martin P. Nillson, Minoan-Mycenaean Religion (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1927), p. 496.

The new god had Zeus for father and a human princess for mother. He is sometimes referred to as the "Twice Born" one. His mother Semele was killed by lightning, when Zeus appeared to her in his full glory. Zeus saved the then six months old baby boy and had him sewn up into his own thigh, until the number of months was full, when he brought him forth. Dionysus was thus both human and divine. He was born of an earthly mother, but he was also born of a god.

Dionysus was the god of peasantry. He was the god of vegetation and animal life, but especially was he the god of wine. The wine was the god, and the god was the wine. Wine consequently played an important part in his worship. Sheer physical intoxication from the wine drinking was at the very heart of this religion. After the devotees had partaken of a good portion of wine, the god was supposed to take possession of them. They then acted not in the way they themselves wanted, but in the way their god wanted them to. Drunkenness was thus a matter of communion with the god. In the "Omophagia" ceremony the devotees devoured the raw flesh of a bull, into which the god was supposed to have been incarnated. By eating the flesh of the bull, they were in a mystical way eating their god, and by drinking the wine, they were in a mystical way drinking their god. Thus they became in a mystical way one with their god.

As to the spread of the Dionysiac Mysteries in the Graeco-Roman world history and archeology has provided us with an abundance of evidences. The rude Macedonians regarded Dionysus in a special way as their god; therefore when Alexander had conquered large parts of Asia and founded colonies, he immediately introduced the Dionysian worship. Alexander himself was conceived of as "Son of Olympus and Son of the Thracian Bacchus." No other god in the Hellenistic world enjoyed the favors of the authorities to such an extent as did Dionysus.[3]

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[2] *Ibid*., p. 504.

In Greece proper the Dionysiac cult spread like prairie fire. At Delphi Dionysus found an important ally in Apollo, the god at Delphi. Apollo originally was his most formidable rival. But instead of fighting one another as rivals, they united their strength in a common cause. The priests at Delphi reckoned with the future, when they admitted Dionysus as a partner at Delphi. The front part of the temple at Delphi was for the worship of Apollo, and the back part for Dionysus. The friendship became so close, they say, that Dionysus found his final resting place there. His grave is shown at Delphi.

Even at sacred Eleusis the cult of Dionysus made its influence felt. It was found impossible to shut him out altogether, as many people had been initiated in both of the mysteries. The collaboration at Eleusis was not as intimate, nor as extensive as at Delphi, but it was by no means negligible. The toleration, friendship, and collaboration these old cults were willing to extend to the new cult gave to it the very best of introductions and proved to be a valuable help in its appeal to get a strong foothold in Greece.

In Asia Minor, from the Aegian Sea in the south to The Euxine in the north, and to the Taurus Valleys in the East, one hundred and fifty towns and cities vied with one another in reverence and worship of Dionysus, as proved by inscriptions on coins, et cetera. At Pergamus, in a temple served by priests appointed by the king, Dionysus was rendered official worship. It is but natural, that those who considered Dionysus as the author of their race and their cult, should be at one with their government in furthering his worship.

In Syria the god of wine was not less popular. His worship was of equal footing with that of the local baals. At Gaza, a silver coin has been discovered, dating from the fifth century B. C. Upon a winged car sits enthroned a bearded god. In the left hand he holds a falcon, and near by is a bearded mask. It was exactly in this way that the Greeks were accustomed to picture Dionysus, when he was upon his blixt-performance throughout the world. But the inscription calls the god so represented

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[3] F. Cumont, Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme Romain (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1929), p. 195.

Yahweh (יהו). Here Dionysus is equalized with the God of the Hebrews.[4] It is not likely that the Jews themselves made this comparison. The Seleucid rulers of Syria were enthusiastic believers in Dionysus, and it was one of their fixed policies to use threats and force and every other means to compel the Jews to render divine worship to Dionysus. Upon a coin, a four drachmas, from the time of Antiochus VI, 145-142 B. C., we find this inscription: "King Antiochus, the epiphany of the god Dionysus."[5]

Antiochus IV Epiphanes used the following methods of oppressing the Jews in regard to their religious beliefs:

> On the king's birthday every month they were taken--bitter was the necessity--to share in the sacrifice, and when the festival of Dionysus came round, they were compelled to wear ivy wreaths for the procession in honor of Dionysus.[6]

Later Nicanor, the governor of Judea, threatened the priests at Jerusalem, saying: "Unless you hand over Judas as my prisoner, I will raze this shrine of God to the ground and break down the altar and erect on this spot a temple of Dionysus for all to see."[7] These insults and threats led directly to the Maccabean revolt and the setting up of the Maccabean dynasty.

How far the Jews were influenced by the Dionysiac Mysteries, if at all, we are not prepared to discuss in this connection. But judging from the synagogue art, some influence undoubtedly made itself felt.

In the land of Egypt, the cult of Dionysus made great progress. At the time of Herodotus, Osiris and Dionysus were often identified.[8] So much had one cult influenced the other, or both one another. Both were dying and rising gods, both had something to do with vegetation and the future life. Dionysus was of course the favorite god of the Ptolemean dynasty. The Ptolemies were Greeks and it was by the help of their god that they had been able to conquer Egypt. The Berliner Neue Museum is in possession of a papyrus containing a decree of Ptolemy IV Philopater (221-204 B. C.). The decree is addressed to those about to be initiated into the

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[4] Johannes Leipoldt, Dionysos (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1931), p. 9.

[5] Ibid., p. 10.

[6] II Macc. 2:7. [7] II Macc. 14:33

[8] Herodotus ii. 144: "Ὅσιρις δέ ἐστὶ Διόνυσος κατὰ Ἑλλάδα γλῶσσαν."

Dionysiac Mysteries and to those in charge of these mysteries. This decree shows unmistakably how dear to the king's heart these mysteries were.[9]

There were at that time very strong Jewish colonies in Egypt, and Philopater (Ptolemy IV) had a strong desire to win converts from Judaism to the Dionysian Mysteries. He attempted to do so partly by threats and partly by persuasion:

> And that those, who were registered, should even be branded on their bodies with an ivy leaf, the emblem of Dionysus, and be reduced to their former status. But if any of them prefer to join those who are initiated into the mysteries, they shall have equal rights with the citizens of Alexandria.[10]

Tattooing in ancient times was a sign of ownership. The religious man of the East was the slave of the god, and often bore his mark upon his body. King Philopater himself bore the ivy mark upon his own body.

The Dionysian Mysteries spread also westward, to the Greek colonies in Sicily and Magna Graecia, southern Italy. A curious and revealing inscription was found at Cumae, saying: "No one may be buried here who has not been made Bakchos."[11] There must have been quite a community in order to have a cemetery all of their own. The devotees evidently attached great significance to their initiation. It is also very interesting to find such an exclusiveness. Most likely it had to do with some superstition in regard to the future life.

The Dionysiac Mysteries expanded also to the Latin-speaking part of the Roman Empire. In the second century B. C., there came to Etruria a messenger of Dionysus. He was a priest of the new god. He was ecstatic and saw visions. He did not attempt at first to institute any public religious orgies, but he worked in secret and held meetings during the nights. Not very many believed at first, but soon the adherents grew.[12] From Etruria the new cult spread to other provinces.

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[9] Johannes Leipoldt, Dionysos (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1931), p. 11.

[10] III Macc. 2:29.

[11] W. K. C. Guthrie, Orpheus and Greek Religion (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1935), p. 204.

[12] Johannes Leipoldt, Dionysos (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1931), p. 12.

It spread also to Rome, the world capital, a rendezvous for all that was good and all that was evil. In this great city, the new religion led somewhat of a secluded existence at first. But it could not remain hidden for long. The propaganda work in secret bore fruit openly. At the beginning, three days every year were set apart for receiving new members by initiation. But after a while it became necessary to set apart five days every month for the initiation of new devotees. So mightily grew the new movement![13]

In 186 B. C. the new cult went to excesses and the government took stern measures for its suppression. The cult was accused of immorality, false witnessing, false signatures, murder, especially by poison, et cetera. All the devotees seem to have been arrested. In small groups of five, offerings were permitted, but large gatherings were forbidden.

A few years ago an inscription was found relating to the Dionysiac community in the little town of Tusculum. The text is inscribed upon three sides of a base. The initiated are all mentioned by name, over four hundred, according to their degree of initiation and the office they held within the brotherhood. At the head of the list stand one "Hero" and one torchbearer (female). In charge of the religious services are seven priests, two priestesses, and one hierophant. At their solemn processions officiated two "god-bearers," two female "basket-bearers," three "grain-winnow-bearers," one "phallo-bearer," two "fire-bearers," et cetera.[14]

Wherever the Greeks went they took their gods and their religion with them, to southern France, to Crete and to every other colony of theirs. Dionysian wallpaintings have been discovered in Latium and Campania,[15] and in Villa Item outside Pompeii.[16] Inscriptions and Dionysiac remains have been discovered in Illyrica, Dacia, and all about the Euxine. At the confines of Germany, at Cologne, a curious dedication was found. It had been consecrated to: "Semele and to her sister goddesses."[17]

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[13] Johannes Leipoldt, Dionysos, p. 12. [14] Ibid., p. 13.

[15] Otto Kern, Die Religionen der Griechen (Berlin: Weidmansche Buchhandlung, 1924), p. 201.

[16] M. I. Rostovtzeff, Mystic Italy (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1927), passim.

Dionysus made his conquests not only among Greeks, but also among barbarians. Arabs identified him with their Dusares, and at Susa, the capital of the great kings, a crude poet celebrates him as a solar divinity.[18] He established his worship in Persia, Bactria, in Arabia, and other places in Asia.[19]

Judging from the many remains from many lands, no other religion in the Mediterranean world had so many believers, spread so extensively, and enjoyed such popularity as the Dionysian cult.[20] Many of their cult practices and excesses seem objectionable to us, and we cannot but wonder how people like the Greeks, with their love of art and beauty, and the Romans, with their love of law and order, could ever have embraced such a religion. But we must remember that their idea of religion was not the twentieth century idea. Their gods were not circumscribed by any laws or conventions, subscribed to by men. These were necessary with men, in their relations with one another, but they did not apply to the gods, or to the relationship between gods and men. In worshipping the gods men must follow the ways of the gods. These ways cannot be known by men. It therefore behooves men to follow the leads of the gods. Let your god have full control of you and act at his bidding. Be natural! Let conventions go! Follow the lead of your god and you cannot be far wrong!

The Ante-Nicene Fathers devote considerable time in combatting the mystery religions, and especially the Dionysiac mysteries. These references cannot always be trusted, as they appear in writings of polemic nature. But they are of inestimable value in this respect, that they are an irrefutable evidence of the fact that these Mysteries persisted and were going strong in the days of these Fathers.

The Dionysian Mysteries and their missionary methods claim our special interests on account of their remarkable success, their persistency in a changing world, their ability to satisfy the religious need at that time, and on account of the many conflicts with an emerging Christianity.

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[17] Franz Cumont, Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme Romain (4th ed., Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1929), p. 200.

[18] Ibid., p. 196.

[19] A. D. Nock, Conversion (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), p. 25.

[20] Johannes Leipoldt, Dionysos (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1931), Preface.

The Dionysiac Mystics firmly believed they had a message to the world. This made them a missionary religion and supplied them with a missionary interest. Rightly or wrongly they believed that their god was the god of all men. He had come to mean much in their own lives, and he would mean much in other lives, too. He had brought joy and release to themselves and he would do it to others. Not only so, but they had come to believe, too, that it was the will of their god that they should make him known throughout the world. They began their missionary work at home, among their own people, the Thracians. When they migrated to other lands, they took their god and their religion with them. Then they took him to the Greeks and to the Romans, and finally to the barbarians.

If we begin to analyze the missionary impulse, we will find always these two elements: this is the will of God, this is what men need. Without such an impulse there cannot be any real or any lasting missionary interest. There will be no missionary attempts either, and no missionary methods will be worked out. Every human being was sorely in need, so it was thought, of what this religion could supply. Without faith in Dionysus men had no hope in this world, and surely none in the shady existence beyond the grave. But with the seal of their god, and with his sacraments, and his friendship all was well. With such a belief they became fired with a burning missionary zeal. They came very near to being monotheistic in their belief, although not in practice, in claiming for their god full control of every life in this world and the next.

There is a strong probability that the Dionysian devotees thought of their god as a missionary of his own cult, going with and encouraging and directing his followers on missionary tours throughout the world. In Athens, during the great procession, Dionysus was drawn through the streets in a ship's wagon. Many Greek art-pieces also picture him in a ship surrounded by maenads and women, some of the latter being non-Greeks. Leipoldt thinks that the picture of Dionysus enthroned in a boat, surrounded by an enthusiastic following, is an attempt to picture Dionysus and his devotees setting out on a missionary voyage.[21]

Attractive Features of the Dionysiac Mysteries

(1) They promised much for this life: liberty, pleasure, joy, power, communion with god, et cetera. Men expect religion to do something for them, to be of some value to them in the struggles of life. They are looking for release from themselves and from the humdrums of life. They are looking for joy and peace and freedom from fear and want, and they want to know the powers, or the power, that control our universe. Can a man have communion with him? Is he friendly to man? To these questions, and to every other beside, this cult had an answer. Men of that day wanted liberty from oppression and freedom from drudgery. They wanted release from the conventional, the man-made. They had very few enjoyments in life and hardly any relaxation at all. This particular brand of religion not only promised release, and joy, and pleasure, it actually gave it, according to the testimony of many who had experienced it. By indulging in excessive wine-drinking and dancing they were brought into an ecstatic state in which they were able to forget all their troubles, themselves and all the world. This was the way of the gods, particularly that of Dionysus. The god himself took an interest in the individual. He wanted every man to be free, to be happy and experience that release from anxiety and care. The initiation and what seemed to be excesses were but means of grace, sacraments, whereby the neophyte was enabled to lead a happy, carefree life on earth, and enjoy a blissful immortality. Through ecstatic communion with god they gathered new strength to meet the hardships of life. Plato undoubtedly expressed the popular idea of his time, that a Bacchae could perform miracles. When under the influence of divine power, maidens could draw milk and honey from rivers, and many other similar things.[22] The way of Dionysus was the way of the good life. What Dionysus promised, Dionysus gave.

(2) They promised immortality and a life full of bliss in the next world. The Dionysiac Mysteries were both this-worldly

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[21] Johannes Leipoldt, Dionysos (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1931), p. 7.

[22] Harold R. Willoughby, Pagan Regeneration (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), p. 83.

and other-worldly. They had something to give both for this world and the next. Their promises were pretty equally divided between these two worlds. People of those days had a gruesome picture or idea of the unhappy conditions in the nether world. People were living in utter darkness, wallowing in mire, and had to perform tasks that they could never hope to accomplish and from which they could never expect any release as long as they were unfinished. The only bright hope was to gain the favor, if possible, of the god who was the ruler of this unhappy abode. The Dionysian Mysteries knew these powers and how to gain the friendship and favor of that mighty potentate. This god was supposed to have a brotherhood on earth, and the only way to acquire his good will and favor was to be initiated into his mysteries, and learn his ways and have communion with him while on earth. Some of the dramatic performances were supposed to reproduce some of the experiences of the god, while he had his abode on earth. Thus by being one with him in life, one would surely be one with him in death and for all time to come. The devotee would thus be given a password that would open every door, overcome every difficulty encountered, and admit him into the very presence of the god himself. Is it to be wondered at, that such a religion, with all its eccentricities and irregularities, secured a large following?

Missionary Methods of the Dionysiac Mysteries

(1) They took advantage of the favor they enjoyed from kings and rulers to spread their cult. It was the good fortune of the new cult to travel in the wake of Alexander's world-conquests. It was for all practical purposes the state religion of Macedonia, and the religion of Alexander and his generals and men. The Diadochi established dynasties both in Syria and in Egypt and elsewhere, and as such they continued to worship and show favor to the cult of their homeland. Greek officials and Greek immigrants craved their old religion. Priests came there to minister, in the first instance, to the needs of their own countrymen. But they came there also to do missionary work among the non-Greeks. This was a comparatively easy matter, when conditions were so favorable. The rulers of the land encouraged them in every way in their missionary efforts. It meant something to the conquered people to be invited to join the same brotherhood as the king and his ministers. The rulers knew that it would be one more tie, that would

bind the conquered people to their foreign government, if they could be persuaded to accept the same religion. The messengers and devotees of the cult made every possible use of the unprecedented opportunities that were theirs. The cult actually basked in the sunshine of the mighty. There are many examples to show that the kings and the governors did not stop at showing favors. They actually used threats and compulsions in their eagerness to convert people from other religions to the Dionysian cult, e. g. the Seleucids in Syria and the Ptolemies in Egypt in their efforts to convert the Jews.

(2) They befriended and coöperated with native or older religions. We have already had occasion to refer to the friendship and coöperation which existed between Dionysus and Eleusis and Delphi. The same praxis was followed in other lands, e. g. in Egypt with regard to the Osiris cult, and in Arabia with regard to the Dusares cult. This coöperative friendship was of mutual interest. It benefited both partners of the deal. The native religions sought to curry official favor by befriending the new religion of the court. And the newcomer expected thereby to win the confidence of the people as a first step towards embracing the new faith. But there can be no doubt that it was the new cult that reaped the greatest benefit out of the bargain. The new cult was now in a better position to draw new recruits from the established religions, while these other religions had hardly a chance to win any adherents from the new religion.

(3) They accommodated their methods and their practices to suit different localities and changing conditions. When messengers arrived in a new place with the object of spreading their teachings and their cult, without any assurance of official favor, as for example in Etruria and Rome, they started their work in secret and on a small scale.[23] At other places, where the government favored their propaganda work, they appeared in full force from the very first, with their whole paraphernalia. There was no need of secrecy here. They had no objection against syncretism, as a method in their missionary work, and made the widest use of it. The most objectionable orgies were gradually sloughed off in civilized countries like Greece and Rome. This was done in order to allay public opinion or to stave off trouble with the government.

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[23] Johannes Leipoldt, Dionysus (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1931), p. 12.

They had no objection to people worshipping their god under another name, as long as he was worshipped in the proper way. With such flexible and accommodating methods, they succeeded in gaining an entrance everywhere.

(4) They accommodated their religious requirements to the weakness of human nature. They required very little from their devotees. There were no hard rules to comply with, no heavy burden laid upon weak shoulders. There was no hard examination or any question of moral fitness. Something that was shown, we do not know what, was so effectual, that nothing more was needed. Look, believe, and be saved. These three words were at the very heart of the initiation services. Literate and illiterate, slaves and free, men and women were here on an equal footing. No one was denied entrance into the brotherhood on account of any moral delinquency or ignorance. Instead of having a strait gate and a narrow road, they made the entrance gate wide and the road broad for the devotees to walk in. Dionysus cannot be called an ethical god, in our sense of the word, and he made very few ethical demands. The only rigorous demand made seems to have been absolute silence in regard to the initiatory rites. Drunkenness and excesses were part and parcel of their religion. Dionysus himself was called "the mad god," and his followers acted as "mad," too. By excessive wine-drinking and dancing they worked themselves into a state of religious frenzy. Then they had ecstatic experiences, and their god took full possession of them. The well-known sentence of the great Posidonius would have been altogether unintelligible without the Dionysiac Mysteries: "To experience god in ecstacy is the surest way to know god."[24] Yes, here was a religion without any moral demands. There can be no doubt but that this accommodation to the frailty of human nature made a strong appeal to the people of that age.

(5) They employed art and painting. They made extensive use of art and painting in their missionary propaganda. Wolfgang Helbig has given a description of wall-paintings from Pompeii, Stabiae, and Herculaneum, of which 233 belong to the Dionysiac Mysteries.[25] These wall-paintings are found not only in cult-

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[24] Johannes Leipoldt, Dionysos (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1931), p. 16.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

places, but also in many of the homes of the people. There can be no doubt that art had a part and a place in their missionary propaganda, and a very important part too. It was one method employed, by which they hoped to be able to influence a certain class of people. Many of the paintings were crude and of little value as art. But they had an appeal all of their own. There was the sexual appeal, and the appeal of the mysterious and unknown. The same secrecy that was imposed upon the initiates in regard to the sacred emblems shown, was imposed upon the artist and painter, too. These paintings may be suggestive as to the mysteries, but they are not revealing any secrets. If they answered one question, they raised ten. The very strangeness of these paintings, as of the whole cult for that matter, was its very best advertisement.

> It was of great value to the Dionysian missionaries, that their cult was so exceedingly strange. The very strangeness aroused interest. Already that was a gain, a first step. Dance and music appealed to some, as did the speeches of the ecstatics to others.[26]

The Dionysian missionaries were the missionary pioneers in the Mediterranean world. "Die Dionysische Gemeinde ist wohl die erste, die in der Mittelmèerwelt Mission betreibt."[27] The messengers of Cybele, the Syrian goddess, Isis, and Mithraism followed in their footsteps and partly used their methods.

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[26] *Ibid.*, *passim*.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

CHAPTER III

THE ORPHIC MYSTERIES

The Origin and Spread of Orphism

Did Orpheus ever exist, or is he only a myth? It is almost a hopeless task to attempt to solve this question, to try to unravel this intricate skein. If he never did exist, how did it come about that one of the most celebrated religions in antiquity bears his name? If he really existed, why is it that we know so little about him, and why is all that we know of him in mythical form? It is enough for our purpose, that such a religion called Orphism existed, and that it is alleged to have had Orpheus as its founder.

Orpheus is supposed to have been a Thracian by birth, son of the muse Kalliope. His father is sometimes said to have been Apollo, more often Oiagros, a Thracian river god. Orpheus is supposed to have been a singer, a musician, a revealer of mysteries, a prophet, an exact theologian, a reformer, who was martyred for his efforts. He is most often represented as a musician, with his lyre, charming beasts and savage men.

Orphism is a reformed Dionysianism. It started within the Dionysiac cult, and it never really extricated itself from its meshes. It is not always possible to say with certainty: this is Orphism, this is Dionysianism. They run into one another. The contents of the two mysteries, the teachings and the dogmas are quite distinct, but the cult-rites continued to run parallel to one another.

Orphism came like other reformers to give new meanings to old superstition; to purge religion of that which was of the senses and degrading; to teach man to become himself a god, if possible in this world, otherwise in the next. Like other reform movements, Orphism retained, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, traces of the old religion. Orpheus is a hero. He is never considered as a god. The worship of Orphism centered in

Dionysus-Zagreus.

Zagreus was the son of Zeus and Persephone and destined one day to be the ruler of the universe. The Titans out of jealousy got hold of him, tore him to pieces, cooked him and ate the pieces. Athena preserved the heart and brought it to Zeus, who swallowed it. When later Semele bore Dionysus to Zeus, the new god was but Zagreus reborn. Zeus in his anger blasted the Titans with his thunderbolts, and from their ashes man was created. The Titans had already consumed Zagreus, and their ashes contained thus the vitality of a divine being. Hence man was believed to be a compound of two natures, one Dionysiac and immortal, the other Titanic and mortal.

Orphism had a history of about two thousand years. It had its birth, its gradual development, its manhood and its old age, as well as its final disappearance. Naturally Orphism was not exactly the same in all these stages; neither was it exactly alike in every part of the Empire. But it can be said, that Orphism developed a theology and a philosophy, the like which the world had never seen before. It evokes our admiration even today, and its influence upon contemporary and later philosophies and religions was immense. Metempsychosis, mysticism, individual responsibility, infernal punishments and rewards, redemption, purification, and an elaborate cosmology, these are some of the elements taken at random from the body of Orphic theology.

The Orphics had a sacred literature, containing both dogma and precept. Their dogmas include an involved mythology, whose chief features are a god, who is also the creator, a succession of divine dynasties, and a story of the origin of mankind, which carries with it a doctrine of original impurity. They include rites of purification and communion. Purification could also be secured by certain habits of life, the essence of which was the observance of a set of prohibitions. The body, in the eyes of the Orphics, was a mere hindrance to the soul in search for god. Asceticism, therefore, appears as an important feature. Purity of life and due observation of the rites were ultimately rewarded by the gift of immortality. Transmigration of the soul was necessary for trial and purgation, but the circle of re-births could be shortened by right living.

One meets with considerable difficulty in trying to trace the spread of Orphism in the Graeco-Roman world, due to the fact that it was so closely connected with Dionysianism. Wherever the Dionysiac mysteries went, Orphism went too, not as a separate entity or brotherhood, but through its literature and philosophy it made its influence felt in ever widening circles.

Orphism spread rapidly in Thrace and enjoyed special favors as a national religion.[1] It was found in Lesbos, Athens, Eleusis, Lerna, Phlya, South Italy, in Sicily and Crete.[2] It was established at Croton, Southern Italy, in the sixth century B. C.[3] Vases with Orphic pictures, motifs from the underworld, have been excavated at Altamura, Ruvo, Pacileo, and Tarentum.[4] A red-figured vase was discovered at Naples: some women attacking Orpheus; a statue of Orpheus was found on the Esquiline Hill, at Rome. At Pompeii two wall-paintings have been found: Orpheus playing on his lyre to a group of wild beasts, and Orpheus playing to the muses--name given--and to Herakles.[5]

Coins have been found in Thrace, dating from the third century A. D., and in Alexandria from the time of Antoninus Pius. These coins have on the reverse side a picture of Orpheus, playing on his lyre to a charmed group of animals. A mosaic from the Isle of Wight, Britain, has been unearthed, picturing Orpheus playing to birds and animals.[6]

Orphism and Orphic art greatly influenced Christian art. In the Christian catacombs, in Rome, are to be seen a series of paintings, representing Orpheus playing to the beasts, gradually fading into that of the Good Shepherd. Orpheus is still playing, but the only audience consists of sheep.[7] We have also a Haematite seal-cylinder, or amulet, of the third century A. D., with Orpheus crucified and the inscription Ὄρφεος Βακκικος. This seal may have been used by a Gnostic Orphic-Christian sect, or by the Orphics themselves, commemorating the sufferings of Orpheus, in imitation of the Christians.

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[1] Vittorio D. Macchioro, From Orpheus to Paul (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1930), p. 145.

[2] J. R. Watmough, Orphism (Cambridge: University Press, 1934), p. 59.

[3] J. B. Bury, The Cambridge Ancient History (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1934), IV, 532.

[4] Johannes Leipoldt, "Der Umwelt des Urchristentums," Bilderatlas zur Religionsgeschichte (1926), Pictures: 174, 176-77.

[5] W. K. C. Guthrie, Orpheus and Greek Religion (London: Methuen & Co., 1935), pp. 42, 22.

[6] Ibid., pp. 1, 22.

[7] Ibid., pp. 262, 263.

Orphism was not limited to a few places only. Its influence was not limited within its own narrow sphere. Orphism finally disappeared as a religion, but not until it had enriched every other religion with which it came in contact, and put its stamp upon all the philosophical systems of its day.

Orphism lingered on and was contemporaneous with Christianity for several centuries. There was still a trade in the charms and spells of Orpheus in the time of the patriarch Athanasius, early fourth century A. D., who waxes indignant over the old women, who "for twenty obols or a glass of wine will disgorge a spell of Orpheus at you."[8] The messengers of Christianity and Orphism must often have met on their missionary tours in the Graeco-Roman world. What did they have to say to one another?

Attractive Features of the Orphic Mysteries

(1) The Orphics stressed the fact that theirs was a reformed cult, stripped of all excesses. The Orphics were not heretics, they were merely dissenters. They had much in common with the cult of Dionysus. Orpheus stood for reform. He was the Luther and the Calvin of Dionysianism. In spite of the fact that, generally speaking, the cult of Dionysus appealed to the common people, there was still an increasing number of philosophically-minded, educated, and thinking people to whom the Dionysiac rites and ceremonies were appalling, disgraceful, and anathema. Many preferred to risk their weal or woe in the other world rather than participate in such wild excesses and act the way of a madman here. Even within Dionysianism itself were men, who were worried over the course events had taken.

Gradually within the cult there arose a reformer, with courage, moral stamina, and ability of leadership. The practices he could not reform, he sought to justify or explain by its mythology. He did not want to throw away the baby with its bathing water. But when once a reform-movement is started, no one can tell where it will stop. Before Orphism was through with its reform, it had a new theology, a new way of salvation, and in reality a new god, Dionysus-Zagreus.[9] As Orphism developed it took on the form of a philosophico-religious system. And a very respectable system it was, indeed! The worst excrescencies and excesses were all sloughed off, and a new system effective in its workings and respectable in its appearance, had been created. Orphism was now in a position to make a powerful appeal to those elements in society, which were dissatisfied with the indecencies and excesses of Dionysianism. Within Dionysianism the Orphics found a substantial nucleus of supporters and in society as a whole they found a promising mission field. In their propaganda work they emphasized the points they had in common with the older cult, so as not to appear rootless, but they also emphasized the points of disagreement, especially those points in which the older cult had laid itself open to criticism. Their god was not in favor of these excesses, and he had never practised them. In points where they differed, Orphism had simply gone back to the original.

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[8] Otto Kern, Orphicorum Fragmenta (Berlin, 1922), p. 104.

(2) The Orphics had a philosophical explanation of god, man and the universe. In order to make their religion more palatable to those whom they tried to win, the Orphics worked out a reasonable explanation in regard to God, man, and the universe. This at once raised Orphism far above Dionysianism and most other religions, too. Orphism saw the futility and the inconsistency of a polytheistic faith and aspired rather after a vague and spiritualized monotheism. This idea was not and could not have been fully achieved. God to the Orphics was an ethical being, and the worshipper must strive after holiness and moral living until he reaches the goal, becoming like god. But monotheism and subjective morality are not ends to be achieved instantaneously. The many gods do not, all of a sudden, combine themselves into the one. So it is with little surprise that we find Orphism retaining, consciously or unconsciously, traces of the old religion-wild-bull feasts, ceremonial purifications, scrupulous rules of initiation, et cetera. Exactly the same may be said of all reformations. There is never any complete break with the old religion. Not every-

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[9] A. D. Nock, Conversion (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), p. 26.

thing that ought to be is sloughed off.

Man has a dual nature, being created from the ashes of the Titans, after they had killed and devoured Dionysus-Zagreus. Just as the ashes contained both Titan and divine elements, so human nature does too. Man is therefore imperfect and sullied and in need of purification. This is a long and tedious process and has to be achieved by a series of rebirths over a long period of time. This is the doctrine of transmigration. Man's condition is deplorable, but not hopeless. These rebirths have a moral aim and end in final release from the contaminated body.

The Orphic cosmogony is a rather complicated myth. First came Time, from whom sprang Ether and Chaos. Time formed a silver egg. Out of the egg sprang Ἔρως, or in other versions Phanes, god of light. The development of the world was a self-revelation of this power. This philosophical explanation was something new, and aroused the interest immediately of the thinking part of the population and appealed to them as a reasonable and good religion. It was a religion far in advance of any other, and one in which even an educated man could believe.

(3) They held out a way of escape from bodily imprisonment and impurity. The Orphics considered the body as the prison-house of the soul, wherein the soul pays for the outrages committed by the Titans. From this prison-house souls can finally escape through death, the only perfect catharsis, the complete deliverance of the soul from its bodily burden. But this deliverance can be assured only by the destruction of the body. While the body exists there is always the possibility that the soul may enter its former prison. Hence the necessity for funeral rites, which involve the annihilation of the body. Full blessedness was impossible until the soul could rest assured that it would not have to enter its bodily prison again. The Orphics had another reason for preferring to cremate their dead, instead of burying them. They believed that fire had the power to blot out the impurity of the soul, especially the original Titanic one.[10]

Man is not only in need of bodily release from the house of imprisonment, he is also in need of purification for his soul. Here is where transmigration comes in. Man being released from one bodily prison has to enter another and another until the impurity of the soul is finally cleansed away. This round of rebirths is a weary one, but tinged with hope of final release.

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[10] Vittorio D. Macchioro, From Orpheus to Paul (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1930), pp. 118, 119.

In the Campagno Tablets, the soul rejoices over its final release from the weary round of rebirths and says:

> I have paid the penalty for deeds unrighteous,
> I have flown out of the sorrowful weary wheel,
> I have passed with eager feet to the circle desired,
> I have sunk beneath the bosom of Despoina, queen
> of the underworld.[11]

Inscribed upon the Petelia gold tablets and buried with the corpse, serving as a protection on the road and as an introduction to the nether world, were these words:

> I am a child of Earth and of the starry Heaven,
> But my race is of Heaven. This you know yourselves,
> And lo, I am parched with thirst, and I perish,
> Give me quickly the cold water, flowing forth from
> the Lake of Memory.

And back comes the answer:

> Happy and Blessed One, thou shalt be god instead
> of mortal.[12]

The Orphics thus held out the hope of final release from bodily imprisonment and impurity, and the hope of release from the weary circle of rebirths.

(4) They claimed to be able to secure pardon and release for the departed ones. The living have always exhibited a particular interest in departed ancestors and friends. Very early in Ancient times the idea grew up that the departed ones were not actually dead, but living somehow and somewhere, sometimes suffering for their misdeeds, sometimes enjoying the favors of the gods. This belief gradually led to the desire to do something for the departed. In Rigveda we find the thought expressed, that "pious works of the pious" can help others to salvation.[13] Zoroaster believed in a middle state after death. He had twelve stages, with the possibility of passing from the one to the other. In

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[11] Jane Ellen Harrison, Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion (Cambridge: University Press, 1903), p. 670.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 670.

[13] Rigveda. 7, 35, 4; cf. Oldenberg, Rel. d. Veda, p. 289.

Judaism, during the Inter-Testamental times, we have at least one example of prayer for the dead. When Judas Maccabeus was defending himself against Gorgias, governor of Jamnia, a few of his men fell in the battle. When they were to bury them, they found under the shirts of every one of the dead men amulets of the idols of Jamnia. "They betook themselves to supplication, beseeching that the sin committed might be wholly blotted out."[14] Judas then forwarded to Jerusalem two thousand drachmas "as for a sin offering." "Hence he made propitiation for the dead, that they might be released from their sin."[15] Quite early in the history of Christianity, we find traces of, that prayers were offered for the dead.

Orphism, which in so many respects was ahead of its time and a trail-blazer in religion, could not very well have omitted this phase either. Adeimantos, in the Republic, speaks of certain mystery mongers and diviners, "who knock at the doors of the rich and persuade them that they possess a god-given power to purge away the sins of his forefathers by means of sacrifices and incantations with delightful accompaniments of festal ritual." A little later he describes those whom he has in mind:

> They parade a mass of books by Mousaios and Orpheus, which form the basis of their ritual, and they persuade not only individuals but whole communities, that by means of sacrifices and festal sports they can provide deliverance and purgation from the effect of sins, both for the living and the departed soul as well, processes which they call initiations, that free from the pains of Hades, while dire penalties await those, who refuse their communion.[16]

The Orphic ceremonial enabled the descendant to obtain from the gods pardon and purification for his departed ancestors, who may be paying the penalty in the next world for the misdeeds of the past.[17] The desire to do something for their departed ancestors was very strong, and anything that could be done for them touched a very tender spot in their hearts. Here at this point the Orphics were in a position to make a strong appeal. It was an appeal to their filial piety and to their duty as sons and daughters. If the ancestors were in need and could be reached, who would not be willing to do all in their power to help them? If prayers can do anything for them, by all means let us have them read. Buddhism has succeeded in getting such a hold in China, chiefly because of its masses for the dead and its eagerness to relieve the sufferings of the departed. Ancestral worship was prevalent in Greece just as it is in China. And human nature is very much the same, whether it be in Greece or China.

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[14] II Macc. 12:42 [15] II Macc. 12:43-45.

[16] Plato Republic. ii, 364c; Cf. Lewis Richard Farnell, Greek Hero Cults (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), p. 380. Erwin Rohde, Psyche, trans. W. B. Hillis (New York: Harcourt & Co., 1925), pp. 344, 358.

[17] Erwin Rohde, Psyche, p. 344.

(5) They stressed the fact that theirs was a religion of redemption. Salvation and personal religion emerged in Orphism.[18] Redemption, individual salvation, σωτηρία, became the cry of the day. Any god willing to undertake such a task, with reasonable prospect of success, was assured of ardent worshippers. People were longing for communion with god, and for an assurance that all would be well with them in the next world.

This appeal was a common appeal of all the Mystery religions. Had Orphism then any particular appeal to make in this respect? Quite distinctly so. The god of Orphism was an ethical god, and he had ethical demands upon his followers. We may put it this way: in the other Mysteries salvation was an act solely by the god concerned, while in Orphism salvation was an act of god, plus the coöperation of man, by ethical living and moral restraints. In Orphism this truism holds good; god alone can save man, but god cannot save man alone. Man must coöperate with god in working out his own salvation. It was not exactly an easy way of redemption. Other ways were being presented, with far less stringent demands. But the easy way cannot be the surest way. The dancing and screaming and ecstatic crowd may not after all be on the road to Elysium. It seems more reasonable that those who enter through the strait gate and walk the narrow path will reach that goal. If god is an ethical god, his demands must be fulfilled. The redemptive way is thus the Orphic way.

Missionary Methods of the Orphic Mysteries

(1) The Orphics made extensive use of literature. Orphism had a large body of sacred literature, passing under the name of Orpheus and Musaeus, singers of the mythical past. The early

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[18] A. D. Nock, Conversion (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), p. 26.

sacred literature appears to have taken shape in the sixth century B. C., and largely at Athens.[19] It emerged at a time of social unrest and religious anxiety, which is apparent by its desire for purification and peace. The tone of its literature is prophetic, in the Jewish sense of the word. Orphism was essentially and fundamentally a "book religion." Their Scripture, Ἵεροι λόγοι, sets forth in detail the whole scriptural foundation of the Orphic religion--the myth of the World-egg, explaining the origin of the cosmic order, the succession of the gods, and the legends of the divine son, Dionysus-Zagreus. The religion of Orpheus emphasized the relation of the individual soul with god, and for authority man ought to turn to Scripture, not to the priests. There is a suggestion in Plato that literary authority very largely was made to take the responsibility for the rites.[20] Another group of Orphic literature consists of eighty-seven hymns. These sacred writings were held in the highest esteem and exercised a wide influence. Its ideas fascinated Pindar and influenced Pythagoreanism.[21] Orphism was not localized at any sanctuary. It could spread wherever the theological literature, which it produced in considerable volume, found willing readers. Through its literature Orphism made a great contribution to contemporary life and thought of the day and has enriched future generations and emerging religions ever since. This literature answered many of the questions which had been in the minds of the people, and provided a satisfactory solution to many of the problems that had baffled the minds of the wisest. The ideas expressed in this literature penetrated the entire society, so that even the illiterate and the ignorant came to know them. Literature proved to be a very effective missionary method, and we are simply following in the footsteps of the Orphics when we today make extensive use of tracts and Christian literature in our missionary work.

(2) They made extensive use of music and song. Music and song played an important part in the Orphic Mysteries. All the prophets of Orphism, beginning with Orpheus himself, were believed to have been excellent singers. Iamblichus alludes to songs which

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[19] Ibid., p. 26.

[20] Plato *Republic*. ii. 364e.

[21] A. D. Nock, *Conversion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), p. 27.

prepared the neophyte for the epiphany of the gods.[22] Orpheus by the magic power of his music earned for himself a place among the heroes. He was called on to assist in settling a quarrel by making the participants forget their wraths in listening to his singing. He calmed a stormy sea by the power of his music. He charmed the clashing rocks, while the Argo passed through. He descended into the realm of Pluto. Outside the gate of Hades he began to play, and the shades crowded round him to listen. Cerberus himself was softened and Ixion's wheel stood still. His prayer to lead Eurydice, his wife, back to the upper air once more was granted.[23]

Orpheus is supposed to have charmed both the living and the dead by his lyre and to have performed the miraculous. On many of the paintings and coins that have been preserved to our day, he is playing upon his lyre, while beasts, and birds, and quadrupeds are flocking around, charmed and tamed by his music. The carnivorous animals do not devour any longer, and the weaker ones have lost their fear.

The Orphics were practical psychologists, without knowing it. They knew the value of music and song in their services and in their missionary work. They wanted quietness, solemnity, and order in their services, while the Dionysiacs were just the opposite. And so it came about that song and music came to be used extensively by the Orphics in their endeavor to spread their cult. By so doing they were but following in the footsteps of their great leader, and employing a missionary method which experience had taught them was beneficial. In their intense missionary propaganda they found that music and song really could perform the miraculous. It made men forget things that were trivial and sad. It spoke directly to the hearts of men, and it prepared them for the message they were to hear.

(3) They made extensive use of human agencies in their missionary endeavor. Literature and music and song, important as they are, had been without any practical value without human agencies. Someone had to write the literature and to compose the

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[22] Iamblichus De Mysteriis. i. 12; also Vittorio D. Macchioro, From Orpheus to Paul (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1930), p. 69.

[23] W. K. C. Guthrie, Orpheus and Greek Religion (London: Methuen & Co., 1935), p. 31.

music. Someone had to make the instruments and someone had to play them. Someone had to do the colportage work, and someone had to go to far away places and proclaim the message. Travelling Orphic missionaries were met with on many of the roads of the Empire. They were carrying a good supply of books, selling them or distributing them gratuitously. A little group of men and children surrounds him, and he is engaged in a lively conversation. When the crowd is small, or no people at all, we notice that our Orphic missionary takes out his instrument and begins to play. The sound is sent through waves in the air, and soon the children begin to run and the older people stop and listen. In a short while he has a crowd surrounding him, and he can continue his missionary work, in whatever way he thinks profitable.

Plato in his Republic speaks somewhat contemptuously "of the itinerant ritualists, who knock at the doors of the rich, the vendors of magic incantations, who promise absolution from sins and happiness in the next world to be attained by ritual of purification and mystic initiation."[24] It is clear that some kind of Orphic propagandism, whether through books or itinerant mystery priests, or both, had been in vogue sometime before Plato. It shows also that the missionary impulse was so strong, that even false prophets took part. These are the despair in every religion. Where there are good coins, some false may be found too. It was the Orphic missionaries that first heralded in the West this new doctrine of the weakness and sinfulness of men and their need of grace and cathartic ritual. The Orphic missionaries were the first to bring into the West the solemn doctrine of souls fallen from their native high place, handicapped by original impurity, their punishment or purifications during a "cycle of births," their deliverance through sacraments, of identification with a Savior god, by means of which they would be enabled to say: "Child of earth and the starry heaven my race is divine."[25]

(4) They stressed the great risk they were running, who neglected being initiated into the mysteries. In very many of the Orphic paintings we find the Danaids, Sisyphus, and Tantalus. Why are they there? What do they signify? Plato speaks of the

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[24] Plato Republic. ii, 364a.

[25] S. Angus, Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World pp. 297, 298.

Danaids as an Orphic conception, and that they had to carry water in a sieve.[26] It is the fate of the uninitiated that is pictured so vividly. The rites they neglected on earth as impious must be performed forever in Hades. The man who has not been purified in this world cannot be purified in the other. He is forever carrying water for the bath of purification, and it is forever running away from him, out of a broken pitcher or a sieve. The useless repetition becomes a punishment. Thus the uninitiated were warned by pictures of the dangers awaiting them in Hades if they neglected to be initiated. What a mighty danger signal this was![27]

On one of these paintings can be seen a married couple with a child. Marriage is a symbol of initiation. By their side stands Orpheus, with his lyre as usual. In full confidence, and in company with Orpheus, they draw near to the ruler of the underworld. They had been initiated, and they had nothing to fear.[28] The child with the little wagon, on the painting, may simply be there to point out that the two grown-ups were a married couple. Or maybe, as we think more likely, the artist wanted to point out that children were also initiated into the mysteries, as we know they were in the Eleusinian.

It is clear that the Orphics put forth a strenuous effort to reach all classes of people; the educated with their philosophy, music lovers with music and song, the artistically minded, children, and the uneducated with illustrative material and myths. These pictures speak with a loud voice: don't neglect your own salvation; don't neglect to do today, that upon which your eternal happiness depends, and which may be too late tomorrow. Myths and pictures were the "stop, look, listen" sign, employed by the Orphics as one of their missionary methods.

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[26] Martin P. Nilsson, A History of Greek Religion (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), p. 215.

[27] *Ibid*., p. 219.

[28] Johannes Leipoldt, "Die Religionen in der Umvelt des Urchristentums," Bilderatlas zur Religions geschichte (1926), XXI,175 and *passim*.

CHAPTER IV

THE ORIENTAL MYSTERIES

History and Expansion of the Magna Mater Cult

This goddess is known to us under various names: Magna Mater, the Phrygian goddess, Cybele, Mother of the Gods, et cetera.

At the dawn of history we find the cult of the Magna Mater widely spread in Asia Minor, in Sardis, Cyzicus, Mt. Dindymon, and in Prymnessus. This supports the theory that the divinity belonged to the native population of the peninsula. The native deity suffered modification first at the hand of the Phrygian invaders, who took over this religion from the Hittites and other native tribes. The goddess can therefore be called the Phrygian goddess only geographically, as she is pre-Phrygian in origin.[1] In the third century it seems to have been influenced by Semitic religions. The medium of communication between the Semitic people and the Phrygians were the Lydians, who represented the Semitic stock in Asia Minor. The date when this took place was not far removed from the year 585 B. C., when Lydia became mistress of Phrygia.[2]

It is not possible to say when the Great Mother made her first passage over to Europe, or how she thrived there in her earliest days. Two routes were open to her: the Hellespont and Thrace route, and the Aegean Islands route. All that we can say, as to the introduction of the cult of the Mother of the Gods into Europe is that it found its way into Thrace early, was known in Boeotia in Pindar's time and entered Attica near the end of the fifth century B. C.[3] The Athenians were never warm supporters of the cult. That the Greeks tolerated the worship at all was due to the fact that it had so much in common with certain of their own gods.

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[1] Hugo Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen in Hellenistisch-Römischen Zeitalter (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1930), p. 91.

[2] Grant Showerman, "The Great Mother of the Gods," Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin, No. 43 (Madison, 1901), p. 247.

The introduction of the Sibylline books by Lucius Tarquinius Superbus (485-479 B. C.) is significant in the history of religions of Rome. This marks the date when native Roman religion began to be arrested and transformed under the influence of the religions of the East.[4]

The acquisition of the Sibylline books occurred at a time when Rome had practically no acquaintance with the Oriental religions. The books came to Rome from Cumae, and to Cumae they had come from Erythrae, whither they had been brought from Gergis, near Mount Ida. First of the foreign divinities to be introduced were: Apollo, 431 B. C.; Proserpina, 399 B. C.; Asclepius, 293 B. C., as a consequence of a plague; Floralia, 238 B. C.

In the year 205, during the debate in the Senate as to what to do about Hannibal who was still in Italy, the decemvirs consulted the Sibylline books and came upon a passage which said, that "whenever an enemy from an alien land should wage war on Italy, he could be expelled thence and conquered if the Idaean Mother should be brought to Rome from Pessinus." An embassy of five citizens of note was sent to fetch her from Pessinus at Pergamum. The day of her arrival in Rome was made a holiday, incense was burned and prayers were offered, that propitiously and with good will the goddess would enter the city. Arrived in Rome she was borne to the temple of victory on the Palatine, inside the pomerium. This took place in April, 204 B. C.[5]

The crops at once improved; Hannibal was forced out of Italy and the goddess was honored by being admitted to state worship.[6]

Literature and art furnish us with little information as to the history of the growth of the cult during the ensuing hundred years. There are a few indications though that the cult thrived, and that a temple was built in her honor.

Magna Mater continued to be the goddess of Victory. She enjoyed special privileges given to no other cult except the state religion. Early in the first century B. C. a Roman citizen became a eunuch and devoted himself to the service of the Mother. About 83 B. C. she begins to figure on coins.

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[3] Ibid., p. 256. [4] Ibid., p. 221. [5] Ibid., p. 227.

[6] Walter Addison Jayne, The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilisation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), p. 483.

Attis was the male-companion deity of the Mother, worshipped in the homeland of Phrygia. Attis worship was not originally native to Phrygia. It was derived from the Aphrodite-Adonis worship in the South and was a comparatively late development. Attis was not known in Rome during the republic. Under the Empire the Anatolian cult spread to all parts of Asia Minor and found its way even into Syria. In the reign of Commodus, coins bearing representations of the Mother were struck in Phrygia, Bithynia, Mysia, Ionia and Lydia.[7] Numerous coins testify to the prosperity of the cult in Thrace, and Moesia was a stronghold of the cult. The Magna Mater Mysteries followed the Roman arms into Africa. She appears on Egyptian coins of Antoninus Pius. In Mauretania, Caesarea especially, was the home of the cult.[8] Augustine in his youth witnessed the games and scenic festivities of Lavatio at Carthage.[9] The age of the Antonines marked the rise and spread of the Taurobolium. In Spain inscriptions attest taurobolia in Emerita and Corduba. At Mago, Minorca Island, was a temple to the Mother and Attis. The Italian peninsula received her in every province, and Aquitania and the Gauls, Noricum, Pannonia, Dacia, Dalmatia, the Rheinland, and even Britain have left traces of the divinity.[10]

Centers of the Magna Mater cult in Italy and elsewhere were: Ostia, Portus, Praeneste, Tibur and other cities near Rome; Cumae, Puteoli Corfinium, Venafrum, Saepinum, Beneventum, Venusia, Brundisium, Falerii, Faesulae, Interamnia, Augusta Taurinorum, Mediolanium, Brixia, Verona, Aquileia, Tergeste, Capodistria, all in Italy; and Salonae, in Dalmatia; Celeia, in Noricum; Narbo, Forum Julii, Vasio, Dea Augusta Vocontiorum, Valentia, and Tegna, in Gallia Narbonensis; Lugdunum and Augustodunum, in Gallia Lugdunensis; and Tournacum in Gallia Belgica.[11]

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[7] Grant Showerman, The Great Mother of the Gods, p. 293.

[8] Ibid., p. 295. [9] Augustine De Civit Dei. ii. 4.

[10] Grant Showerman, The Great Mother of the Gods, p. 295.

[11] W. H. Roscher, Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1897), II, 2, "Meter," pp. 2918-2930.

In Syria Magna Mater and Dea Syria became so much blended that they could hardly be distinguished. In Greece Magna Mater was blended with the worship of Rhea. At Peiraeus she was identified with Aphrodite. At Carthage it was the Virgo Caelestis with whom she was associated. If the Germans worshipped her, they no doubt saw in her their own Mater Deum.[12] In Rome itself, and in Italy, she was akin to Ceres and was confused even with Minerva and Juno.[13] But except where the cult existed in proximity to other goddesses, however, the Great Mother preserved her identity completely. If a blending with other divinities occurred, it was more at their expense that the identification took place. She was protected by the State, and she was the protectress of the State.

Transplanted from her ancient home in the East to the New West, she thrived so well under the new conditions that in three centuries the western home became the center of the cult, not an outpost. Her worship was disseminated to the utmost confines of the Empire to Britain, Spain, Africa, Syria and Scythia. The golden age of prosperity for the empire was also the age of the greatest prosperity for the Mysteries of the Great Mother. The cult was favored by the Roman Emperors. Nero had a short-lived interest in this religion. Vespasian restored a temple of the Mother at Herculanum.[14] Elagabalus, the mad emperor, was initiated into her Mysteries.[15]

The Magna Mater was the first of the Oriental Mysteries to find its way to Rome, and the only one which was officially invited to come by the State. After nearly six centuries of service and triumph, the religion of the Magna Mater came to an end. She was outlawed and the priests driven from her temples. This took place by the arrival on the scene of Theodosius, as Roman emperor. A few years elapsed and the Sibylline books, which had been the cause of her introduction, were burned by Stilicho.[16]

History and Expansion of the Isiac Mysteries

We know more about the history of religion in Egypt in ancient times than we know of any other land. This may be chiefly due to the fact that climate and reverence for the dead collaborated in preserving to this day their religious ideas and beliefs, and hopes and longings. In Egypt has been found the earliest known discussion of right and wrong, embedded in a Memphite drama (middle of the fourth millenium B. C.). In the "Pyramid Texts" we find the earliest surviving pictures of a celestial hereafter, over five thousand years ago. The epithet "Sun of Righteousness," the Egyptians used two thousand years before the Hebrews borrowed it from them.[17]

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[12] Tacitus, Germ. 40, p. 297.

[13] Grant Showerman, The Great Mother of the Gods, p. 297.

[14] Ibid., p. 304. [15] Ibid., p. 307. [16] Ibid., p. 312.

Of all the religious beliefs that existed in Egypt from pre-historic times down into the Roman period, the oldest and most venerated was that connected with the Isis-Osiris cult. The "Pyramid Texts" refer to Osiris as "Lord of the Sky." The Osirian religion is one of the most remarkable survival from that early world.[18] During the many thousand years of Egyptian history many changes occurred not only in the ceremonies connected with the cult, but the legends and origins of the Osirian faith received also many additions and interpolations.

The essential elements of these legends are as follows: Osiris, while king on earth, had made his people change their evil ways of living, taught them the art of cultivation and how to worship the gods and enacted wise laws. His wicked brother Set, or Typhon, hated him and succeeded by guile to accomplish his violent death. When Isis, his sister and wife, heard of this cruel deed, she put on mourning and went in search for the body of her husband. After a long and tedious search, she succeeded in recovering his scattered body and carefully embalmed it. Isis, assisted by some other gods, performed certain magical rites over the body, which revivified the corpse and caused her husband to live again. He was then translated to the nether world, where he reigned as "Lord of the Underworld and Ruler of the Dead." It was as god of the dead that Osiris gained his great popularity. Herodotus says that "Isis and Osiris were revered by every inhabitant of the country."[19] The Isiac cult penetrated every nook and corner of Egypt. A papyrus from the second century A. D. shows that Isis and Osiris were worshipped in sixty-seven cities and towns, in the Delta alone, and in fifty-five places outside of Egypt, in Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Palestine, Syria, yes even in Arabia, Persia and India.[20]

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[17] James Henry Breasted, The Dawn of Conscience (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), pp. 15, 19, 83.

[18] James Henry Breasted, Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), pp. 149, 150.

Ptolemy I conceived the idea of creating a religion in which all his subjects, Greeks as well as Egyptians, could unite. His motto was: "one king, one religion." He was met at first with coldness, both by the Egyptians and the Greeks, which latter had taken their own Greek god with them and did not like to change. The Egyptians preferred Osiris to Serapis, the name given to the new god. The result was a composite religion, a combination of the old creed of the Pharaohs and the Greek mysteries. But the Greek population in Egypt was dependent upon the favor of the king and needed the ruler just as much as he needed them. The dynasty of Lagides favored Serapis, and the Greeks began to accept the cult. Serapis became a god of the living. He was a healing god, and he could help people who strove for political fame. Isis continued to be the divine spouse of both Osiris and Serapis, depending on which one of the gods the worshipper preferred. Isis was favored by all. The Serapis cult could not do without her, and the Osiris cult refused to give her up. Serapis was brought to Greece largely as a result of political influence. The Ptolemies were Greeks themselves and friendly to the Greeks, and they pursued a pro-Athenian policy. The Greeks both at home and in their Greek-speaking colonies, or former colonies, reciprocated by accepting the Greek-Egyptian god Serapis. The cult of Serapis was a public one in Athens in the early part of the third century.[21] It was spread to Asia Minor, Halicarnassus, Crete and other places through political influence of the Egyptian-Greek dynasty.[22] King Nicocreon introduced the Serapis worship into

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[19] Herodotus ii. 42. 171.

[20] Hugo Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen in Hellenistisch-Römischen Zeitalter (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1930), p. 48.

[21] Pausanias i. 18. 4.

[22] Thomas Allan Brady, "The Reception of the Egyptian Cults by the Greeks," The University of Missouri Studies, Vol. X, 1, (1935), pp. 22, 23.

Cyprus, Agathocles into Sicily, at the time of his marriage with the daughter-in-law of Ptolemy I.[23] Wherever the authority and prestige of the Lagides was felt this Serapis religion spread.

The military officials continued to accept the worship of Serapis and Isis and to cultivate it as a means to health, wealth, position, and fame. Excavations of Egyptian temples in Greece and Greek-Asia-Minor, and monuments, et cetera, discovered therein, give these interesting facts: Serapis temples, 21; Isis-Serapis temples, 8; Isis temples, 2. In the Latin speaking half of the Roman empire, Serapis hardly appears at all.[24] If we bear in mind that Serapis is the creation of the Lagides dynasty in Egypt, this phenomenon becomes quite intelligible.

The Isis-Osiris Mysteries became popular in the Roman world and spread extensively. They expanded with commercial and political relationship between Egypt and other nations. Sailors and merchants, protected by Egyptian squadrons, propagated the worship of Isis, the goddess of navigation, on the coasts of Syria, Asia Minor, Greece and in the islands of the Archipelago, and as far as the Hellespont and Thrace.[25]

Merchants, sailors, slaves, artisans, Egyptian men of letters, even the discharged soldiers of the three legions which once were quartered in the Valley of the Nile contributed to its diffusion. It entered Africa, outside of Egypt, by the way of Carthage and the Danubian countries through the great emporium of Aquileia.[26] The nucleus group of worshippers were Egyptians, in practically every case, which when they migrated to other parts of the world had their goddess migrate with them. The cult started insignificantly and in secret, but it soon became public with a priest and a sacristan.[27]

In the second century B. C. Isiac temples are found at

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[23] Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 298.

[24] Thomas Allan Brady, The Reception of the Egyptian Cults by the Greeks, pp. 45, 46.

[25] Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 80.

[26] Ibid., p. 83.

[27] T. A. Brady, The Reception of the Egyptian Cults by the Greeks, p. 19.

Pompeii, Puteoli and in the principal cities of Southern Italy. During the time of Sulla, the Isis worship was introduced into Rome, at first as a private worship.[28] The cult grew rapidly in numbers. Its altars invaded the Capitolina, its practices created distrust, and the Senate, in 58 B. C., ordered the destruction of all the altars of the cult, fifty-three in number. The repressive measures, taken in 54, 50 and 48 B. C., could not restrain the ardor of its worshippers. Their influence became so great, that in 43 B. C. the triumvirs withdrew active opposition and decreed a temple to be built. In A. D. 19, caused by rumors of the debauching of a noble lady in one of the temples, Tiberius threw the image of Isis into the Tiber, destroyed the shrines and banished or crucified the priests.[29]

Why was the Egyptian worship the only one of all the Oriental Mysteries to suffer repeated persecutions? The motive was probably a two-fold one: This cult was said to exercise a corrupting influence, and its mysteries aroused suspicion, and it was at least partly tainted with politics. It was supported and propagated by the Ptolemies. It issued from Alexandria, whose superiority Rome felt and feared. The members were from the lower classes, and they were suspected of what we in the twentieth century call "Fifth Column" activities. Had Anthony been victorious at Actium, Isis and Serapis would have entered Rome in triumph, but they were vanquished with Cleopatra.[30]

Immigrants in ever increasing numbers went to seek their fortunes in foreign lands. A colony of Egyptian Greeks, established at Nimes by Augustus, took the gods of Egypt with them thither. At the beginning of our era the great movements of conversions set in, which established the Isiac worship from the outskirts of Sahara to the vallum of Britain, and from the mountains of Asturias to the mouth of the Danube.[31] Tradition claims that some of the brightest minds of those days were initiated into the Isiac Mysteries: Pythagoras, Plutarch and Apuleius. This gave to the Egyptian Mysteries an added distinction and honor.[32] Soon after the death of Tiberius, Caligula erected the great temple of Isis Campensis on the Campus Martius, and openly confessed the religion of Isis.[33] Vespasian and Titus passed the night before their triumph at her shrine, and the great procession started from it. Domitian escaped from the populace in the garb of a priest of Isis.[34] Isis enjoyed the favor of every dynasty: the Flavians, the Antonines, and the Severi. This cult reached its highest development under the Antonines. It was the most effective and bitter opponent of Christianity until Paganism was proscribed.[35] Isis processions marched the streets of Rome as late as 394 A. D. The patriarch Theophilus consigned the Serapeum of Alexandria to the flames, having himself struck the first blow with an axe against the colossal statue of the god (Serapis), that had so long been the object of veneration. It was from this Serapeum that missionary activities had been directed and disseminated throughout the Graeco-Roman world.[36] The worship of the Egyptian Mysteries seems to have come to an end between the reigns of Theodosius and Justinian.[37]

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[28] Apuleius Metamorphoses. xi, 30.

[29] Josephus Antiquities.xviii. 65 ff.

[30] Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religion in Roman Paganism, p. 82.

[31] Ibid., p. 83.

History and Expansion of the Syrian Goddess

This is the ordinary name in the West for the goddess, also called Atargatis, or "Dea Syria." She is mentioned in the Apocrypha under the name Atergatis, and as having a temple at Carnaim, which Judas Maccabeus destroyed.[38] Her home was in Syria and her chief sanctuary was situated at Hierapolis. Her divine spouse was Hadad. These two constituted the highest divine pair in Syria. Hadad seems to have been practically neglected in the West. It was the goddess who attracted the attention of the Graeco-Roman world. In the eyes of the Greeks, she was simply the Syrian goddess, and among the Latins she was known as "Dea Syria," popularly shortened to Iasura. Atargatis may properly be described as a lion-goddess, also as a dove-goddess. Originally she was neither but a fish-goddess. Fishes and doves were sacred to her, and consequently not eaten. According to Lucius, Dea Syria was a woman in the upper part of her body, and a fish, with fishtail, in the lower part.[39]

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[32] Harold P. Cooke, Osiris, A Study in Myths, Mysteries, and Religion (London: The C. W. Daniel Co., 1931), p. 106.

[33] Hugo Gressmann, Tod und Auferstehung des Osiris (Leipzig: Hinrichsche Buchhandlung, 1923), p. 27.

[34] Walter Addison Jayne, The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilization, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), p. 480.

[35] *Ibid*., p. 481.

[36] Harold R. Willoughby, Pagan Regeneration (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), p. 179.

[37] Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 85.

[38] II Macc. 12, 27.

The fame of her Sanctuary at Hierapolis spread into distant lands, and people went there on pilgrimages to worship from Cappadocia, Arabia, Babylonia, and other places. Temples were dedicated to her all over Syria, e. g. at Ashkelon, Heliopolis, Baalbek, Damascus, Coele-Syria, et cetera.[40] The prophet Zechariah knew of the lamentations for Hadad-Rimmon.[41] Her mysteries were known in Palestine at an early date, but what interests us mostly at present is her expansion westward.

Her most conspicuous missionaries were the merchants, the slaves, the soldiers, and the travelling priests. It was merchants of Syrian extraction that first naturalized the Syrian goddess in the Graeco-Roman world. In numerous Greek harbors she has left marks after her presence: in Mylasa, Smyrna, Athens, Piraeus, Thuria, and the coast of Achaia.[42] During the second century B.C. Syrian traders established settlements along the coast of Asia Minor, and in the Archipelago, and they were especially strong at Delos. When the empire had been firmly established and security for mercantile pursuits had been assured, immigration from Syria assumed new proportions. The Syrians' love for lucre was proverbial. They established themselves on the whole coast of the Mediterranean, as far as Spain. At Malaga an inscription mentions a certain corporation formed by them. The Italian ports of Pozzuoli, Ostia, and Naples attracted a great number. Wherever they could find a profitable trade, they even penetrated far into the interior. These immigrations had an economic, a social, and a religious importance, which cannot be overestimated. By the way of Danube, they went as far as Pannonia, and by way of the Rhone they reached Lyons. They were especially numerous in Gaul, and spread over the whole province as far as Treves.[43]

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[39] Lucius, Dea Syria, p. 14; cf. Hugo Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen, p. 72.

[40] Pauly's, Encyklopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenshaft (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1901), p. 2238.

[41] Zech. 12:11.

[42] Pauly's Encyklopädie, p. 2239.

Some of the earliest worshippers of the Syrian goddess were slaves. Prisoners taken in the war against Antiochus the Great were sent to Italy in great numbers and sold at public auctions. Beginning with the second century B. C., merchants began to import slaves. Delos was the chief slave center. Under the empire importation of slaves increased. They were needed to fill domestic places, to cultivate the lands, and as contractors, workers in mines, et cetera.[44] The great slave-revolution, which devastated Sicily in 134 B. C. was started by a slave from Apamea, a votary of the Syrian goddess.

The Roman emperors recruited soldiers for the Imperial army from Syria and Mesopotamia. A cohort of one thousand archers from Emesa was established in Pannonia; another cohort from Damascus was keeping watch on the borders of Upper Germany. Mauretania received irregulars from Palmyra. Bodies of troops, levied in Iturea, on the outskirts of the Arabian desert, were encamped in Dacia, Germany, Egypt and Cappadocia. Because of these Syrian troops, the Syrian religion found worshippers in every Roman province, as far as Africa, Germany, and Brittany.[45]

At Beroa, in Macedonia, the following dedication has been excavated, dating from the third century B. C., "Appollonides the Son of Dexilaos, priest, to Atargatis the Savior." In the year 239 B. C. we have records of manumission "to the Syrian maiden goddess."[46]

The nucleus of the religion of the Syrian goddess was everywhere Syrian immigrants: slaves, traders, merchants, and soldiers. Wherever they went, they took their religion and their cult practices with them. Some time later travelling priests visited these places in order to organize the new cult and to do propaganda work. It was the first Semitic religion to gain a foothold in Italy. To this Syrian nucleus new believers were added increasingly from among the people of the West.

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[43] Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 108.

[44] Ibid., pp. 105, 106. [45] Ibid., p. 113.

[46] A. D. Nock, Conversion (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1933), p. 59.

The History and Expansion of Mithraism

The history of Mithraism can be traced back to the hoary past. The name of Mithra is celebrated in the hymns of Vedas and in the Avesta. At a time when the ancestors of the Persians were still living together with the ancestors of the Hindus, they were already worshippers of Mithra.[47] The earliest reference to Mithra that we have is found in "The Sound Table of King Mitanni," in which the gods Mithra, Varuna, Indra, and the Nasatjas are mentioned.[48] From this it is clear that Mithra is not only an Indo-Iranian deity, but towering over all the rest, at least with the rulers of Asia Minor.

> The old writings leave us in no doubt that Mithra in reality was considered as the highest god. He is the Lord, the all-powerful Mithra. He is the creator god for his believers, and the god of the star-spangled heaven . . . . Mithra is an appellative and signifies "covenant" or "contract." His enemies are called "Mthro-drug" (contract breakers). He is the "covenant-god," the giver of wealth and riches, the protector of the poor, and the avenger of injustices.[49]

Mithra is always watching and nothing escapes his all-seeing eyes. He employs the sun as his chariot, drawn by four heavenly horses, and travels around the Zodiac once in twenty-four hours. Finally he becomes the sun itself, the "Sol invictus." He is the god of war, the judge and rewarder. No man in this world can think so base a thought, or say so mean a word, or practice so evil a deed, but that Mithra in his heaven can think many times more beautiful thoughts, and say more beautiful words, and do more beautiful deeds.[50]

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[47] Harold R. Willoughby, Pagan Regeneration, p. 143.

[48] Hugo Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen im Hellenistisch-Römischen Zeitalter (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1930), p. 139.

[49] H. S. Nyberg, Irans Forntida Religioner (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1937), pp. 65, 67.

[50] Hugo Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen im Hellenistisch-Römischen Zeitalter, p. 140.

When we speak of the Mithraic Mysteries, we mean the Iranian religion of Mithra, as it developed outside of Persia. The tribes of Iran had worshipped Mithra from time immemorial, and they never ceased to worship him until forcefully converted to Islam.[51]

But the indigenous Persian religion of Mithra developed along different lines and considerably differed from the Hellenistic type of Mithraism. There is no trace of any mystery religion in the Mithra of Avesta. It became a mystery religion first after having been transplanted upon foreign soil. It started out as a national religion. Mithra was very intimately connected with the ruling dynasty of Persia. He was actually the house-god of the Persian king, and the father of the dynasty. The kings ruled by his favor and were secure in their position, as long as they behaved correctly in respect to the great ancestor of the dynasty. The Persian kings made claim to be the great high priests of the Mithra cult, in its original Persian form.[52]

The expansion of Mithraism followed in the main two great highways: the dynastic and the soldier highways. Persian religion has mightily influenced every religion with which it has come in contact. It influenced Judaism very extensively and through Judaism also Christianity. It influenced Mohammedanism to a large extent, and it has obstinately refused to go all the way with their conquerors in their religious viewpoint. The present Shiah Sect in Persia is the result. The same determination and independence is one of the characteristics of Mithraism. It never sloughed off completely the Iranian way to be a kingly religion, and it kept consistently to its dogged determination to go so far, and no further. It was the aristocracy among the mystery religions. It was syncretistic enough to appeal to the Greeks and the Romans. But it absolutely refused to go the length other mysteries had gone. Other mystery cults had passion-drama, public processions and ceremonials. Mithraism went its own way and had none of these. Others admitted men and women. Mithraism, only men.

But with all this dogged persistence to save its own identity and its own characteristics, Mithraism underwent a revolutionary change. It started out as a national religion; it ended up with being international. It began as a royal cult; it became a religion for soldiers and slaves. It began as a thisworldly religion, with little interest in the future; it developed to be a religion of redemption. It set out with a limited outlook of service, its own nation; it grew to international dimensions.

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[51] Franz Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1910), p. 2.

[52] Hugo Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen im Hellenistisch-Römischen Zeitalter, p. 141.

In order to become a missionary religion it was necessary for it to free itself from the shackles of nationalism. It was a revolutionary change to denationalize oneself. But it paid the price and cut itself loose from the past and from the nation and went out into the world with a world-embracing message and with a Savior god, for at least half of mankind. The other half it graciously consigned to the mother goddesses to redeem.

At first the dynasty, in its international dealings and intercourses, made some lame attempts to influence other nations to accept the Persian god as their god. The attempt met with meagre success, as it would have meant practically to have accepted Persian overlordship. It was first after the Mithra cult had been thoroughly denationalized, that the soldiers, and slaves carried it in triumph to extensive parts of the Roman empire.

The first step in its westward expansion was Babylonia. Mithra was here not the highest god, but well the chief god. He was always connected with Ahura Mazda and Anahita. As Cyrus conquered Babylon, and made Babylonia a Persian province, then the native religion was fused with that of the ruler.[53] In Chaldaea Mithraism assimilated astrology and became a religion of astrology. The next step on its westward expansion was Asia Minor, Armenia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Galatia, Phrygia, and Lydia. The Anatolian rulers showed their personal devotion to Mithra by the frequency with which the name of Mithridates occurred in their families.[54]

During the wars of Alexander, in spite of Persian defeat, the religion of Mithra not only held its own, but began to make proselytes among the soldiers. In Tarsus, Cilicia, he was worshipped for centuries, and Cilician pirates may have brought the religion to Rome.[55] Mithra next invaded Phoenicia and Egypt. Both the missionaries and the political influence effectively coöperated in the expansion of the "god of light." Asia Minor was especially noted for its missionary enthusiasm. Every soldier, recruited for the Imperial army, became a potential missionary for his religion, and every slave sold likewise.

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[53] Hugo Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen im Hellenistisch-Römischen Zeitalter, p. 146.

[54] Harold R. Willoughby, Pagan Regeneration, p. 148.

In Greece proper Mithra remained a stranger. Several causes explain this fact. Greece worshipped its glorious past, and it had already mysteries of its own. There were no foreign soldiers quartered in Greece to spread the cult, and it is a well known fact that the chief center of Mithraic influences were the garrison towns of the frontier provinces. The Greeks refused to believe in the gods of their enemies. The Persian wars had so estranged the Greeks from everything Persian, that there was little or no hope that an enemy religion would make any impression or gain any converts in Greece. In all the countries washed by the Aegean Sea only one single, late Mithraic inscription in Piraeus has been found. The cult of Mithra, therefore, by-passed Greece and moved directly from Asia Minor to Italy. This movement became accelerated after the Romans had conquered Asia Minor. Among the recruits that Rome summoned from abroad were numerous Asiatics. No country of the Orient, relative to its size, furnished a larger amount of soldiers than Commagene, where Mithraism had struck deepest root. Numerous soldiers were enlisted in Cappadocia, Pontus, Cilicia, and Syria. These soldiers were ardent worshippers of Mithra, the god of war. The perils these soldiers were exposed to, and their privations, absence from home, and superstitions made them eager to seek their comfort in religion. The army leaders encouraged them in this, because this religion was known to be an incentive to courage and bravery.

It was not until the end of the first century that the name of Mithra began to be generally known in Rome. It was the latest of the Oriental Mysteries to invade Rome, but it became the mightiest one. Due to its lateness in coming, and its favorable reception by the emperor, and its strength in the army, Mithraism escaped being persecuted. It was a religion of great kings and perfectly loyal to the Roman form of government. In fact the emperors found it to their own advantage to befriend themselves with and to further this religion. The great success came during the reign of Emperor Commodus, who himself took part in the Mithra Mysteries.[57] The great blossoming period was the third century A. D. Mithraism began with the Flavians, became prominent under the Antonines and the Severi, and remained the most important cult of paganism until the end of the fourth century.[58] Diocletian officially recognized Mithra as the protector of the reconstructed empire.

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[55] Ibid., p. 150.

[56] Franz Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1910), p. 33.

Excluding Rome and Italy, we have today about five hundred documentary evidences from about eighty cult-centers in the Roman empire, as to the widespread expansion of the Mithra Mysteries.[59] The distribution is not even. The provinces, which had a strong military occupation-force, have also the greatest numbers of cult-centers. From the Euxine Sea to the mountains of Scotland, from the banks of the Rhine to the Sahara Desert, in the border provinces, Mithraic monuments are found.

Germany of all countries is that in which the greatest number of Mithraeums, or places of Mithraic worship, have been discovered. On the entire course of the Rhine, passing through Strassburg, Mayence, Bonn, Cologne, and Dormager a number of monuments have been found, showing clearly the manner in which the new religion spread like an epidemic. In Britain the Mithraic cult seems to have been almost completely restricted to fortified places along the wall of Hadrian. Along the whole stretch of Donau, and in Gaul, as well as in Mauretania and Numidia, a large number of places of worship have come to light. Upon Indo-Scythian coins, Mithra's head is surrounded by a nimbus, pointing to him as the god of light and to his majesty.[60] No sanctuaries have as yet been found in India or Persia, but we may assume that they were built on the same plan as in the Graeco-Roman world. Even in far away China, in the present province of Sinkiang

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[57] Hugo Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen, p. 151.

[58] Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 140.

[59] Hugo Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen, p. 151.

[60] Johannes Leipoldt, "Die Religion des Mithra," Bilderatlas zur Religionsgeschichte (Leipzig, 1930), p. 3.

(Turkestan) Mithra was known. Among the Manichaean fragments discovered at Turfan, the following script was found: "Mithra, greatest messenger of the gods, Mediator of the religion of the elect."[61]

The final conflict, for the mastery of the Roman Empire religiously, stood between Mithraism and Christianity. Mithraism was favored by the emperor and the army. Christianity was persecuted to the very last. But Christianity won out and was raised to the State-religion of the Roman empire. Mithraism was tolerated at first, but the victory of Theodosius, 394 A. D., shattered once and for all the hope of Mithraism to regain its former influence. During the reign of Julian the Apostate (361-363) it came into favor for a few years. In certain remote cantons of the Alps and the Vosges, the cult existed as late as the fifth century.[62] Some of the conceptions propagated by Mithraism, during its three hundred years of existence in the Roman empire, did not perish. Some of its ideas, like the efficacy of sacraments, and the resurrection of the flesh, were taken over and perpetuated by Christianity.

Attractive Features of the Oriental Mysteries

(1) The Oriental Mysteries denationalized religion and appealed directly to the individual.

The national religions of antiquity were state religions, established for the benefit of the state, and controlled by the state. The gods were gods of the State, and were only expected to look after the interest of the State and the nation. To the individual and his needs, they were cold and indifferent. He could not bring to them his personal affairs and petitions and expect any result or help. They remained unsympathetic. They were supposed to look after the interests of the State and had no time or use for the individual. Indirectly, they of course reaped some benefit as individuals from such State-worship, in form of peace and plenty in the land, and good government, when they had it. But that was all they could expect. They were left to themselves with burdens and anxieties. The national gods cared nothing for their burdens of soul and their future happiness. No wonder that people were dissatisfied with these gods.

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[61] Alfred Schütze, Mithras-Mysterien und Urchristentum (Stuttgart: Otto Weigelt, 1937), p. 34.

[62] Franz Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra, p. 206.

Each state had its own national god. It was part of his duty to be partial in favor of the nation which had adopted him as national god, and to be hostile and unfriendly to other nations with which they were at enmity.

The Oriental Mysteries overstepped the national boundaries and proclaimed a Savior-god that was the god of all nations, with no one as his special favorite, and with no one as his enemy. Besides, the gods of the Oriental Mysteries were sympathetic to the individual and his need for the present life and the life to come. They cared for every one who was willing to comply with their conditions and come into their folds. The Mystery Religions sensed correctly that there was very little hope that any nation as a whole would change their allegiance from one national god to another. The god who had any prospect of being a missionary god, a god for all, was the denationalized god. Formulation of their message became their most urgent and important task before they could hope to make any impression at all upon people of other nations. Knowing their own need and their own desires, they knew also the needs and the desires of their fellowmen. In this formulation of their message, they naturally sought to fill a need that was not being served by the national religions. This need was for a religion of redemption, of salvation, for the individual. This was a long step in the history of religion, and a step that was destined to revolutionize the religious history of the world.

(2) The priests of the Oriental Mysteries both awed and impressed their contemporaries.

The oriental priests were not all of the Syrian goddess-type, described by Apuleius, going everywhere, carrying with them the image of the goddess, dancing as dervishes do, cutting themselves with knives, accusing themselves in frenzy of sins against her, scourging themselves, and then begging for alms for her. On occasions they were able to prophesy and to invoke celestial pains and penalties on their mockers. They were able to inspire awe, but not respect. They were a despised class, but their threats inspired fear in a world which ascribed great power to the spoken curse.[63] Isis and Cybele had their mendicant priests, too, very much the same as the Syrian goddess, although it is not known that they went to the extreme of mutilating themselves.

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[63] Apuleius Metamorphoses. viii. 24 ff.

The priests of the Oriental Mysteries were distinguished from common mortals by a tonsure, by a linen tunic, and by their habits, as well as by their garb. They devoted themselves entirely to their ministry and had no other profession.[64]

If the priests had all been of the same calibre, they would not have succeeded as well as they did. Syria possessed a number of sanctuaries, in which an educated clergy meditated and expatiated upon the nature of divine beings. They diffused the idea of a god, without beginning and without end throughout the Roman world, and they had an elevated uranography and astrology.[65] The priests and priestesses of Isis were carefully chosen, trained in the cultic usages, and punctilious in their daily duties.[66] The priests taught men to worship and the application of the useful arts: astronomy, geometry, building, irrigation, mathematics, medicine, et cetera. "The sacerdotal class, having leisure, invented mathematics."[67]

They inspired awe and made a powerful impression, because they were the ones who were in possession of the mysteries, which would enable a man to obtain Salvation, cathartic purification, and a blissful immortality in the world to come. Such a power was more than human. They were in league with the gods and spoke in their name. No other human being, if it was not the emperor himself, seemed to them to be so powerful. Their friendship was worth cultivating, and their displeasure must be avoided. They used their magical power, which they were supposed to have, for the furtherance of their cult and as a missionary method.

(3) The Oriental Mysteries could claim that their religion was compatible with civilization and science. That their religion in reality was a civilizing factor.

In very early times Greece and Rome became purely rationalistic. Thought was unrestrained by any sacred tradition; it even passed judgment upon these traditions, approved or condemned them. Being sometimes conciliatory, sometimes indifferent, and sometimes hostile, it always remained independent of faith. The rites were reproduced, as handed down to them by their ancestors long ago, mechanically without addition or omission. The Oriental Mysteries were sacerdotal in character. They had not divorced science and religion. With them religion was the cradle and the bearer of science. As in medieval Europe, the scholars of Asia and Egypt were priests. In their temples the nature of gods and men were discussed, side by side with philology and history, with mathematics, astronomy, and medicine. Every useful discovery and invention was credited to the gods. They were the possessors of all knowledge and all wisdom, and it was only when they condescended to reveal the secrets, that they became known to men. Mithraism and the Dea Syria had acquired astrological and astronomical knowledge from the Babylonians and Persians. At an early date the Zodiac and the pictorial representation of the four seasons came into use by the Mithraic Mysteries.[68]

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[64] Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1911), p. 94.

[65] Ibid., pp. 120, 128, 130.

[66] Walter Addison Jayne, The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilization (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), p. 482.

[67] Aristotle Metaphysics. i. 1.

The Greeks and Romans felt the attraction of Egypt, where everything was mysterious. They imitated her authors, translated the works of her scholars, invited her artists, and copied her institutions. The prestige of Alexandria seemed invincible. At that period this city was more beautiful, more learned, and better policed than Rome. Alexandrian astronomers under Caesar had reformed the calendar, and Alexandrian priests marked the dates of the holidays of Isis upon it. Osiris taught the Egyptians to worship the gods, gave them laws, introduced agriculture, and established civilization. It was he who taught the Egyptians to build the very wonders of antiquity and modern times, the pyramids. He had committed the government of Egypt to Isis, his wife, and travelled over the whole world, diffusing the blessings of civilization.[69]

These religions, coming from the mystic Orient, upon the waves of an oncoming civilization, made a great impression upon the Graeco-Roman world, which already was dissatisfied with a religion that cared only for the State, but was cold and indifferent to the needs of the individual.

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[68] Hugo Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen im Hellenistisch-Römischen Zeitalter (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1930), p. 149.

[69] Harold P. Cooke, Osiris, a Study in Myths, Mysteries and Religion (London: C. W. Daniel Co., 1931), p. 150.

The Oriental Mysteries were not all equally far advanced in civilization and science. In fact all of them had many crude practices and strange religious ceremonies that were disgraceful to the Romans; but they all excelled in some point or another; and it was felt that they had something to give to the Graeco-Roman world, which it badly needed. These Oriental Mysteries were far more satisfactory to the intellect than any other religion they had ever known.

(4) The gods of the Oriental Mysteries could perform wonders and miracles of healing.

The Oriental gods possessed supernatural powers. They were able to perform miracles of various kinds and especially miracles of healing. Ovid tells the story of Telethusa of Phaestus, in Crete. She was told by her husband to expose the child she was about to bear, if it was a girl. Isis, attended by other Egyptian deities, appeared to her during the night and said:

> O Telethusa, who art one of mine own, lay aside your heavy cares and elude your husband's bidding. Do not hesitate to rear whatever offspring there shall be, when Lucina relieves you by a birth. I am a deity strong to help. I bring aid when invoked; you will not complain that you worshipped an ungrateful deity.[70]

A girl, Iphis, was born, reared as a boy, and in time betrothed to a girl. The time for the marriage drew near. The mother invoked Isis, reminding her that she had obeyed her commands, and Iphis immediately became a youth.

Aristides mentions various miracles and stresses wonders performed by Serapis for sailors.[71] Serapis gave orders in sleep to a blind man and a lame man to go to Vespasian, and they went and were cured of their infirmities.[72]

When disease and suffering came, and death threatened, the people of the Graeco-Roman world regarded it as a visitation of the wrath of some offended god or gods, or as the malevolent act of some evil spirit or deity. It was also believed that there existed some intimate relation between religion and the healing art. In other words, the healing art was the prerogative of the gods and their representatives, the priests.

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[70] Ovid, Metamorphoses. ix. 667 ff; cf. Nock, Conversion, p. 85.

[71] A. D. Nock, Conversion, p. 84.

[72] Ibid., p. 85.

Disease was ascribed to spiritual beings of superhuman powers, malevolence of demons, magic influences, enchantments and spells of the black art, exercised by a sorcerer, wizard, or witch, the evil eye, or an enemy. Sometimes the malady was thought of as superinduced by the gods, or as a visitation of the wrath or revenge of the deity for some act of omission or commission, neglect or impiety, until finally it was held to be a punishment for sin. The demons of disease gained entrance to the body through one of its natural openings in an unguarded moment, eating or gnawing away the entrails and other tissues of the body, and they would, unless driven away, cause death.[73]

Since maladies and diseases were of supernatural origin, they could be successfully combatted only by the aid of supernatural powers. All the gods of the Oriental Mysteries were healing gods.

There is a myth of the Syrian goddess, that she discovered the meteor stone, or stones with souls, which breathed a prophetic spirit and cured diseases.[74]

Healing was a prominent feature of the cultic functions of Magna Mater. Sterile women appealed to the goddess for fertility and were lashed over the loins by the "Galli." Minor officials of the cult (metragyrtes) went through city and country, attending the sick and selling images of the goddess, amulets, which were assumed to cure all ills.[75]

Healing was a prominent part of the cult functions of the priests of Mithra. They cured the sick by divination, astrology, magic, and the use of herbs, which were said to have sprung from the blood of the bull.[76]

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[73] Walter Addison Jayne, The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilizations (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), Vol. XXXIV.

[74] B. Hirschell, Compendium der Geschichte der Medicin (Vienna: 1862), p. 27.

[75] G. Wissowa, Die Religion und Kultus der Römer (Munich: 1912), pp. 63, 64.

[76] P. Bruzon, La Médicine et les Religions (Paris: 1904), pp. 136, 138.

Serapis was a complex character, but he was a healing deity par excellence, an iatromantic deity, working with the dream-oracle, and other forms of divination, with incubation, magic, and like mystic practices. And Isis was a healing divinity of the first rank. She cared for the health of her people and was especially skilled in the treatment of children. To the suffering she came, bringing with her words of magical power, and her mouth was full of the breath of life.

Never are prayers more urgent and sincere than when they are concerned with the healing of loved ones, in cases of critical diseases, and never are hearts more thankful than when such prayers are answered and healing has come to their home. There is always sickness somewhere: in the home, in the community, and death is never far away. During this period of time, when the real cause of sickness was unknown, and the scientific method of healing still was undiscovered, any cult, or Mystery, that claimed to be able to heal the sick, and which had had reasonable success, was sure to have new worshippers seek them out and plead earnestly for help. The healing of the sick thus proved to be one of the most effective missionary methods of the Oriental Mystery religions.

(5) The Oriental Mysteries stressed the goodness and the protective power of the gods, and the benefits that would accrue from this to the believer.

The power and the mercies of their respective gods was a theme, the Oriental Mystery religions loved to expound and enlarge upon. We have already had occasion to refer to the prevalent idea of the presence of malevolent spirits and demons, causing sickness and death, and that it was only the gods who had the power to cope with these inimical forces, harmful to man as an individual and to society as a whole. The gods were not only powerful enough to confine these forces to their proper sphere, but they were also full of compassion and goodness, always willing to come to the rescue of men in need of their help, and who called upon them. Of Isis it was said that she was a divinity of universal character, embracing the virtues of all other goddesses. She was the tutelary deity of women, the goddess of love and fertility to whom all could appeal with assurance of sympathy and aid. She was the goddess of mercy and was loved with a passionate devotion by large numbers of enthusiastic worshippers.[77]

Mithra was for his votaries the highest god, the all-powerful, the Creator god. He is never sleeping, always watching. He has a thousand ears, ten thousand eyes, and ten thousand spies. He is always on the look-out. The high mountains are his observation posts. He is watching over his faithful day and night. He is the giver of wealth and riches. He is the protector of the poor and the avenger of wrongs.[78] The other Mysteries ascribed the same qualities to their gods or goddesses, and substituted or added others. It did not take very much imagination to see that if this was true, and these gods were only half as good and half as powerful as they were made out to be, one could do nothing better than change one's allegiance to them. The temple of Isis, at Sais, bears this inscription: "I am all that has been and is and shall be, and my veil no mortal yet has lifted."[79] Worshippers were assured that if they would purify the body, Isis would cleanse their soul. Therefore, be initiated! Trust the gods, worship them, and they will abundantly reward you! They are the dispensers of every material and spiritual blessing.

(6) The Oriental Mysteries stressed the need of purification, regeneration and communion with the gods, and they had efficacious sacraments, whereby these things could be achieved.

There was at that time a very common feeling, that man in some way had become impure. This was most of the time his own fault, but often it had to do with his ancestors. This impurity hindered men from having free access to the gods and communion with them. The purifications practised in the Oriental Mysteries were believed to wipe out the hereditary impurity of a guilty ancestor, who had aroused the wrath of heaven against his posterity, as well as the impurities the individual himself may have accumulated. Man felt instinctively that he was not pure and holy in the sight of the gods. This made him uneasy for the present and very much concerned for the future. But how to wash away that impurity, he had no means of knowing. But the Oriental Mysteries did know. They had a certain kind of washing, something like baptism, which, when taken in the ritual order, cleansed from every guilt and impurity. Burdened by the consciousness of contamination and disfavor with the gods, men grasped eagerly at a remedy within so easy reach and so efficacious.

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[77] Jayne, The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilization, p. 481.

[78] H. S. Nyberg, Irans Forntida Religioner (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1937), pp. 65-67.

[79] T. R. Glover, The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire (London: Methuen & Co., 1909), p. 104.

Having inherited from their ancestors a body and a soul contaminated with sin, an outward purification was not enough. What was needed was an inward purification, a making over, a regeneration. The word regeneration may not have had the exact connotations it has in the twentieth century. But they had the idea that man needed to be re-created, to experience a new birth. Many with Nicodemus of old asked, "How can a man be born when he is old?" The Oriental Mysteries had a blood-baptism called Taurobolium. The one participating in this blood-baptism had the warm blood of a sacrificed bull dripping down upon him, where he was standing in a lower place. This practice had its origin in Anatolia with the Magna Mater Mysteries, but it was gradually taken over by all the Oriental Mysteries. The earliest recorded Taurobolium in the West, at Puteoli, A. D. 134, was in honor of Venus Caelasta, that is Atargatis.[80] The rite attached itself occasionally to the Mithra and the Isis Mysteries. This baptism became a life-sustaining sacrament for the renovation temporarily, or even ad aeternam, of the human soul. Through it he was supposed to have been so thoroughly purified that he became a new creature, experienced a re-birth, forgiveness of sins, regeneration of the soul, and was assured of a blessed immortality in the life to come.

By partaking of the flesh of an animal, supposed to have divine nature, the votary believed that he became identified with the god, and that he shared in his substance and qualities. The efficaciousness of these three sacraments: the baptism in water, the sprinkling of blood, and the eating of the god himself, was never doubted. One of the causes for the success of the Oriental Mysteries unquestionably lay in the efficacy of their sacraments, as cathartic purification, regeneration of the soul, and in effecting a communion with the gods. These sacraments undoubtedly brought inner peace and satisfaction and a hope, reaching beyond the grave, to many burdened souls.

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[80] A. D. Nock, Conversion, p. 71.

(7) The Oriental Mysteries promised salvation and immortality. The cry for soteria (salvation) had become persistent in the Hellenistic world. The kind of soteria that people in general were mostly interested in had to do with release from the burdens of finitude and the contradictions of this world, from the tyranny of the seven archons of fortune, from the terrors of the magician and the fear of death, from the malefic agencies of demons, and the ills and sorrows of life, from economic insecurity and social and political convulsions, from the sense of guilt and moral failure. But side by side we find increasingly a growing interest for the salvation of the soul, for the good life in this world and for a blissful immortality in the next. The hope of immortality, and the hope of existence, became the mightiest and the most venerable of all affections.[81] The gods of the Oriental Mystery religions were all Savior gods, the only gods that could command a hearing. These gods cared for the individual and his present and future happiness. They were the dispensers of both material and spiritual blessings. They offered much for this life and more in the life beyond. Salvation and immortality were to be had only in the brotherhoods of the gods and by certain prescribed rites, similar to our Christian rites of baptism and communion service. Besides these two rites, they had the rites of initiation and the rite of Taurobolium. The rites of baptism and Taurobolium were of a purificatory nature; they were cathartic rites. The initiation and the communion feast signified a complete communion, almost identification, with God. Having thus been purified and cleansed from all impurity and experienced the presence of god and had mystical communion with him, soteria had come to them, and as a result they were assured of a blessed life with God, in the life to come. In an Egyptian text it is said of the departed faithful: "As surely as Osiris lives, so shall he live also; as surely as Osiris did not die, so shall he not die; as surely as Osiris is not annihilated, so shall he too not be annihilated."[82]

The way was open to all who would come. Rich and poor, free and slave, men and women, Greek and barbarian, all were welcome and invited to come. The very best gifts of all, these gods had for everyone who would receive them. There were no impossible strings either, no difficult tasks to accomplish, no complicated doctrines to learn. Only believe, trust yourself to the gods, be a recipient of the prescribed rites, and you will receive what you have longed for so long. There can be no doubt that this cry for soteria was an expression of the deepest desire in the hearts of men. And here they were offered full satisfaction. Why not accept the gift?

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[81] Plutarch Non posse Suav. 26.

[82] A. Erman, Die Ägyptische Religion, pp. 96-99.

The Missionary Methods of the Oriental Mystery Religions

The Oriental Mystery Religions differed one from the other, both as to origin, development, belief, and emphasis. But they had so much in common, and they came out of the crucible of syncretism so much alike, that we may be justified in grouping them together and treating them as an entity for our present purpose. Coming as they did from the Orient, and from different lands, into the Roman empire as missionary religions, they had to make many adjustments and adaptations. These adjustments were in fact so fundamental, that at least one of these religions emerged practically a new religion.

In regard to their missionary methods, we find both similarities and dissimilarities. In the course of time the variations tended to become less apparent, and the similarities more pronounced. This development was but a natural one. These mysteries had been placed side by side, upon the same mission-field, faced with the same problems, and working for the same end in view. Successful methods, employed by rival or coöperating groups, were sure to be adopted by them all, and inefficient methods, were sure, likewise, to be discarded by all. We find, therefore, a far greater similarity in their missionary methods than was anticipated at first. This does not mean that they emphasized the same method equally much, or exactly alike. Some emphasized this method, some another, but all of them made use of these methods we have grouped together under the heading "Common Missionary Methods." These methods were common in the sense that they were used by all the Oriental Mystery religions.

Our procedure will, therefore, be to discuss first the missionary methods that were in common use by all the Oriental Mysteries, and then, secondly, to discuss such missionary methods used by one or more of them and which could not for obvious reasons be adopted by all.

(1) The Oriental Mysteries instilled into their members a holy zeal for missionary propaganda. Their aim seems to have been: Every member a missionary and no one a slacker. We have no record of how they did it, but there must have been some indoctrination by the priests. Probably it was pointed out that the surest way of obtaining the good will of the gods was to spread abroad their fame and to gain new worshippers. By the formulation of the message, which had already taken place, the priests were enabled to point out to the immigrants, ready to set out for foreign shores, the way to go about it.

Their religion grew more precious to them in foreign lands. Their new surroundings, their loneliness, their homesickness, their uncertainties and their perils made them long for the services of their homeland. They started in a small way the worship of the god of their fathers. Merchants and soldiers were economically better situated and may have been able to procure priests to lead them in their worship. But the slaves, to a large extent prisoners of war, had to get along as best they could until the arrival of a travelling priest.

Their form of worship soon attracted attention, and outsiders began to flock to such services as were open to them, and to make inquiries as to the services to which no outsider was admitted. Members of the brotherhood explained, as well as they could, the benefits that would accrue to everyone who believed as they did and joined their cult. They became very enthusiastic in their relating of the power of their gods, and their willingness and eagerness to help everyone who sought them. They never forgot to extend an invitation to join them in worship. When the exhorter, or missionary, was a military officer, or an official, his words carried so much greater weight. The slaves in the homes and in the offices, the soldiers in their camp and on their marches did proselyting work. The merchant and the banker did the same in their environment. And so it came about that the most conspicuous missionaries of the Oriental Mysteries were the merchants, the slaves and the soldiers. It was not priestly propaganda that was the chief means of spreading these cults in the

West.[83] It was the rank and file of the cult-members who did it.

(2) The Oriental Mysteries coöperated with the native religions and with one another.

Coming from distant lands, sometimes from foreign lands, into the Graeco-Roman world, the Oriental Mysteries had to accommodate themselves as best they could to new situations. There were already older religions in the land which hitherto had had the field all to themselves. These were the national religions. It was essential for the Mysteries not to antagonize them unnecessarily. This was comparatively easy as their spheres of interest did not clash or overlap. Both had their given fields: the national religions looked out for the State; the Mysteries for the individual and his need. No one was obliged to break off his relation with the national cult. They could believe in both. They were all polytheistic religions, and the addition of another god was not of any great concern. It worked out to the satisfaction of both parties. They came not only to tolerate one another; they in a sense coöperated. Each one had his own sphere and there was no interference in each other's work.

The Mysteries found it also to their own advantage to cooperate with one another. The Great Mother had conferred a special benefit upon the State at a time of a national crisis, and enjoyed special privileges for this reason. Later Mysteries tried to befriend Magna Mater, and she magnanimously took them all under her wings in time of danger and need. It had to do with collaboration for mutual protection. But their coöperation went further than that. They actually coöperated with one another in their missionary work. Mithraism gained adherents in Lydia and Phrygia through the Mysteries already there.[84]

Mithraism did not accept women into their membership. To provide for the religious needs of their women, they entered into an agreement with Magna Mater, by which she ministered to the spiritual needs of their women, and they themselves took care of the men.[85] Mithra Sanctuaries and Magna Mater Sanctuaries were placed sometimes wall in wall, as excavations have shown. It often happened that one person was initiated in several Mysteries and held important positions in more than one of them.

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[83] Pauly's Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1901), p. 2239.

[84] Hugo Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen in Hellenistisch-Römischen Zeitalter (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1930), p. 149.

[85] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

In spite of mutual consideration and collaboration, the Mysteries occasionally came in conflict with the national religion and with their sister-Mysteries. In 58 B. C. the Isiac Mysteries came in for distrust and persecution, because the augurs interpreted certain prodigies as evidence of the jealousy of the national gods on account of their invasion.[86]

The ancient religious hostility between the Egyptians and the Persians persisted even in Rome. The Iranian Mysteries appear to have been somewhat estranged from those of Isis, by secret rivalry, if not by open opposition.[87] Due to political enmity between the Greeks and the Persians, Greek National Religion, and the Greek Mysteries never welcomed Mithraism to Greece. It is not to be wondered at that friction should have arisen. What is to be wondered at is that these frictions were not more numerous. "The exceptions prove the rule," even in this case. They practised toleration and coöperation.

(3) The Oriental Mysteries preached and practised the doctrine of fraternity and equality within their brotherhoods.

Half of the Graeco-Roman world was free and the other half slave. One half had all the privileges, even that one of enslaving the other half. There was inequality in opportunities, and in standing before the law, and in ordering their own lives. The greater part of the slaves were Orientals, with little or no education; others, mostly Egyptians and Greeks, were well educated. We hear of slaves in Rome employed as clerks, secretaries, librarians, actors, and musicians. Their education was often superior to that of their masters. Slaves were not the only ones that were underprivileged and excluded from associating with the privileged classes. Into such a society came now the Mystery Religions, inviting people to join their brotherhoods, in which there was no distinction of race, color, upbringing, or social standing. In these brotherhoods free and slave, rich and poor, and men and women enjoyed the same privileges in an equal measure.

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[86] Walter Addison Jayne, The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilization (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), p. 479.

[87] Franz Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1910), p. 178.

It can easily be imagined what a stir this must have made! Here was a brotherhood that excluded none and welcomed all. One undoubted cause of the success in the West of the Oriental Mysteries was the spirit of fraternity and charity which was fostered in the guilds. In these brotherhoods the highest dignities were open to all.[88] Before the gods all were equal. It was the individual as such that counted. Here we may have the beginning of an emerging personality, and its intrinsic value.

The Mysteries appealed to that group in society, little touched by philosophical arguments, which valued the outstretched hand of brotherhood and equality. It was this group that contributed mostly to the growing membership in the Oriental Mysteries. The nucleus was in most cases a little group of Orientals who had immigrated to the West. Around this nucleus, as a rolling snowball, were added increasingly new adherents from each locality.

There can be no doubt that the Mysteries served as a liberating force in society. There was, as we saw, a strong probability that slaves in being initiated into the Eleusinian brotherhood regained their freedom. There is a somewhat similar report from Egypt. "When a slave fled to the temple of Hephaestus at Tarichaea in the Nile Delta, and received the holy sign, no one dared to touch him,"[89] apparently because he, by this act, had become the possession of the god and could not be treated as a slave any longer. This basic thought continued to live in the Mysteries, and the custom of sealing the new recruit is intimately connected with it. When the Oriental Mysteries had been recognized by the State, and when in course of time an accumulation of veneration and prestige had gathered around them, the same privileges may have been extended to them too.

(4) The Oriental Mysteries sought Imperial favor and made good use of it when they had it.

The propagation of the Magna Mater was unique from that of any other Oriental religion. She was called in at a critical moment of the Roman history to aid in the defeat of the enemy.

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[88] Samuel Dill, Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1925).

[89] Hugo Gressmann, "Tod und Auferstehung des Osiris," Der Alte Orient (Leipzig: Hinrichssche Buchhandlung, 1923), p. 24.

Roman armies were soon victorious, and it was ascribed to the coming of the Magna Mater. The government itself protected the new cult, and that attracted many devotees to the worship of the Phrygian goddess. It was not subjected to arbitrary police measures or coercion of the magistrates. It enjoyed official recognition and toleration.[90] In order to gain some measure of favor and protection from the government, the other Oriental Mysteries tried to make alliances with this favored religion.

The Isiac Mysteries came in for considerable disfavor and violent persecution before and during the reign of the emperor Tiberius. But that was of short duration. Emperor Caligula openly confessed the religion of Isis and built a great temple to her on the Mars Field in Rome.[91]

Nero temporarily favored the cult of Dea Syria. She became predominant when the accession of the Severi lent their support of a court that was half Syrian. Functionaries of all kinds, senators and officials vied with one another in devotion to the patron god which the sovereigns patronized in turn. In 218 A. D., the fourteen year old Heliogabalus, a worshipper of the Syrian Baal of Emesa, was placed upon the throne.[92]

Mithra was peculiarly the god and special guardian of the great kings, whom they invoked before great undertakings and by whom they swore their oaths.[93] Emperor Commodus (180-192 A. D.) was initiated into the Mithra-Mysteries. He also took part in the Isis-Mysteries.[94] This step of the emperor created an immense stir in the Graeco-Roman world and told mightily in favor of the Iranian religion. From this moment, exalted dignitaries followed the example of their lord and sovereign and became devotees of the Iranian Mysteries. Until the downfall of paganism the Roman aristocracy remained attached to the solar god, who enjoyed the favor of the princes. From the first years of the third century onward, Mithraism had its chaplain in the palace of the Caesars, and its votaries are seen to offer vows and sacrifices for the protection of Severus and Philippus.

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[90] Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 60.

[91] Hugo Gressmann, "Tod und Auferstehung des Osiris," Der Alte Orient (Leipzig: Hinrichssche Buchhandlung, 1923), p. 27.

[92] Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 114.

[93] Harold R. Willoughby, Pagan Regeneration, p. 146.

[94] Hugo Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen im Hellenistisch-Römischen Zeitalter, p. 151.

Diocletian, Galerius, and Licinius, at their conference in Carnuntum, dedicated with one accord a temple to Mithra. The last pagan that occupied the throne of the Augusti, Julian the Apostate, was an ardent votary of this tutelar god, whom he caused to be worshipped at Constantinople.[95]

For upwards of two hundred years the emperors showed a great predilection for this Iranian religion. They found in its doctrine a support for their personal policy and a staunch advocacy of their autocratic pretensions. They ruled by his grace as reward for their loyalty to him.

The Oriental Mysteries sought and found imperial favor, and they employed it with telling effect for the furtherance of their missionary propaganda.

(5) The Oriental Mysteries made extensive use of symbols, and legends, and paintings, and sculptures.

The Oriental Mysteries appealed to that part of society little swayed by philosophical systems and arguments, by doctrinal beliefs and stately dogmas. Their appeal was fundamentally to slaves, and workers, and soldiers, and women, and children. Not many of the wise and the wealthy and the mighty were among their votaries, not at an early date at least. To this class of people legends were interesting. They could remember them and the teaching they were supposed to bring. They could tell and retell them to their children and their neighbors. They had no difficulty with the veracity of these legends. If they ever had, they were told that the legend had a deeper meaning. It was a symbol of something that could best be expressed in this way, and perhaps only in this way. By such a method they could get rid of anything in the myths and legends that was repulsive. It symbolized something important which could only be understood and made effective in their lives in this way.

The Oriental Mysteries made an extensive use of pictures and sculptures for the same reason. It was good pedagogy to let their instruction enter both through the ear-gate and the eye-gate. These paintings cannot really be called art. But by employing them they were able to carry across their ideas of the gods and their activities on behalf of men, as well as dramatizing some of the incidents in the lives of the gods, which had caused them grief. Death and resurrection of the gods were taught in this way and by dramatizing it.

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[95] Franz Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1910), p. 89.

The sculpture of Mithra Tauroctonus we find in every Mithraic sanctuary. It held the place of honor in the apse of the spelaea as an altar-piece.[96] It served as a constant reminder to the worshippers of the invincibleness and might of the Mithra. No power was too strong for him in nature, or in the spiritual world. Demons stood in awe for his might. Mithra was the sun god, the star-spangled heaven, and he is pictured on monuments come down to us, as sitting in the sun, as in a chariot, drawn by four heavenly horses among the stars. The Zodiac, with its twelve signs, in its daily revolutions subject creatures to their adverse influence. These Zodiacs were represented in all the Mithraeums. In the midst of these adverse influences, the sun god drives his chariot, nullifying or changing these adverse influences. This he does faithfully year out and year in, and at every season of the year, yes every day and every moment.

(6) The Oriental Mysteries made excellent use of personal testimonies of influential believers.

Personal testimonies are of great value in missionary work. Many a missionary today can testify to the fact that a simple, straightforward, honest testimony of a coolie or a farmer has brought more converts into the Christian fold than the missionary with all his preaching and teaching. But should such a testimony come from an influential writer and believer, its value would be considerably enhanced.

Some of these men, of the Oriental or other Mysteries, put their testimony down in writing, which has been preserved to our own day. Plutarch was an Isiac theologian and mystic, who lived in the first century A. D. He was a priest of the Pythian Apollo at Delphi and he also belonged to the Egyptian cult of Isis and Osiris. He wrote an apology for the Egyptian Mysteries of Isis and Osiris. In this apology he unquestionably relates a good deal of his own experience, as for example when he speaks of the mystic experience whereby the initiate, through the sacred Mysteries, is blessed by a vision of God, in which the divine becomes known.[97] Of the initiatory rites he says that the final goal is "knowledge" of God, the greatest gift that man can receive.[98]

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[96] Harold R. Willoughby, Pagan Regeneration, p. 149.

Apuleius was a native of Madaura, North Africa, second century A. D. He was well educated in the schools of the Empire and lived for a long time in Greece and Rome. He was a literary writer of renown. He wrote epics and lyrics, religious hymns and prayers, dramas and novels, medical, mathematical, botanical and astrological works, philosophical treatises and translations. He was a priest in Africa, but his favored occupation was Platonic philosophy and to eulogize Isis, his Savior-goddess. Apuleius has given us the best picture of the Mysteries that has come down to us, and has also given us an insight into what this goddess meant to him and of his own religious experiences. He says:

> I neared the confines of death. I trod the threshold of Prosperine. I was borne through all the elements and returned. In the midst of night I saw the sun beaming in glorious light. I stood before the gods of heaven and the gods of the lower world and adored as I stood close to them.[99]

The gratefulness of Apuleius to the goddess, for delivering him from his animal nature, knows no bounds. He gives expression to his feeling in the following words, addressed to Isis:

> Holy one, Perpetual Savior of the human race, always munificient in your cherishing of mortal men, and meeting as you do, the misfortunes of the wretched with the sweet affection of a mother, while not a single day or night, or even a tiny moment passes in which your benefits lie hidden. You protect men on land and sea, and disperse the storms of life by stretching forth your salutary hand! . . . . My voice has not sufficient eloquence to utter all my appreciation of your greatness. Or would I, had I a thousand mouths and as many

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[97] Martin Rist, "Two Isiac Mystics: Plutarch the Theologian and Apuleius the Priest" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1934), p. 35.

[98] Ibid., p. 40.

[99] Lucius Apuleius, The Golden Ass (translated by Harold Berman, privately printed, 1930), p. 288. Martin Dibelius in his Die Isisweihe bei Apuleius says: "When he [Apuleius] relates the different acts of the initiation he speaks the cult-language, not as an individual apart from the cult." Martin Dibelius, Die Isisweihe bei Apuleius (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitäts buchhandlung, 1917), Band VIII, p. 7.

> tongues to move in an eternal series of never-ending speech![100]

The writings of Apuleius are a mirror of his soul. In reality, part of his writing, concerning his marvelous redemption and his devotion to Isis, is a perfect missionary propaganda pamphlet.

An unnamed author had often intended to translate a book into Greek, to the honor of the god Imouthes. As he procrastinated, fever came upon his mother. She and he went as suppliants to the gods. In a dream the god appeared to them and cured her. A little later the writer was seized with a sudden pain in the right side. He appealed to the god again and was healed. Then he wrote the book, which is said to have caused the god to be greatly revered. He writes:

> The pains in my side ceased, and the god gave me yet another remedy, stilling distress, and I proceeded to proclaim the benefits which he had done to me . . . . The power of the god has gone into every place to save . . . . and every Greek tongue shall tell of the story, and every Greek shall reverence Imouthes, the son of Phtha.[101]

The recording of the blessings received from the gods was a common device of all the Oriental Mysteries. We find also the recording of punishment for sins. Another way of glorification of the deity was by hymns and votive offerings. The hymns told the world at large of the greatness of the god. The one who had received favor from a deity set up an inscription in the temple or a votive work of art.[102] Both oral and written testimonies, relating to the power and mercies and wonders of the gods, were used extensively by the Mysteries as a means to the expansion of their cults.

(7) The Oriental Mysteries issued stern warnings to unbelievers not to neglect their opportunity of being initiated into the Mysteries.

The Oriental Mystery gods were merciful, sympathizing with people in need, and eager to accept anyone into their brotherhoods, willing to come. But if anyone neglected the only means of obtaining salvation and future happiness, he would have to blame himself. A way had been prepared by the gods, and everyone who neglected to walk that way was sure to land some day in a place where he did not desire to be. The Oriental Mystery gods ruled not only in the upper world; they were also sole rulers in the nether world. They were the judges in the underworld, judging men's action in regard to their attitude to the gods. Had they been initiated into the brotherhood of the gods? Had they provided themselves, while on earth, with the password to the blissful habitations of the gods in the Underworld? These were questions to be asked. If not, they were debarred from entering.

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[100] Lucius Apuleius, The Golden Ass (translated by Harold Berman, privately printed, 1930), p. 290.

[101] A. D. Nock, Conversion (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1933), p. 87.

[102] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

We possess a short creed in verse, which a soldier in the third century caused to be inserted on a stone tablet found at Carvoran in Northhumbria, on the Roman wall. It speaks of the Syrian goddess as "weighing life and rights in the balance."[103] The disembodied shades in the nether world existed somewhere, somewhat. But what an existence it was! By various ingenious methods the Mysteries attempted to impress the unconcerned, the hostile, the neglectful. By illustrations of the suffering encountered in the Underworld, by the written page, and by word of mouth, by the priests and their helpers, they tried with considerable degree of success to drive home this firm belief of theirs. Now is the acceptable time to prepare for your future home! Do not delay! Come into the brotherhood! Be initiated at the very first opportunity. The door is open, the road is easy, and the salvation is waiting for you. But woe to the unbelievers, and to the mockers, and to the procrastinating ones, on that day, when the judges of the Underworld are going to deliver their verdict.

Attractive Features in Some of the Oriental Mysteries (B)

(1) The Oriental Mysteries, with their goddesses, appealed to womanhood and motherhood.

It was only the Anatolian, and the Syrian, and the Egyptian Mysteries that had mother goddesses, as well as male deities. Mithraism had no goddess, and it did not receive women into their brotherhood. They had a mutual understanding with the Magna Mater Mysteries that the latter was to receive the women, their wives and daughters.[104]

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[103] A. D. Nock, Conversion, p. 136.

As wife of the deity Hadad, Atargatis was the goddess of procreation and fruitfulness.[105] Magna Mater represented the broad universal conception of a "mother goddess." She is the "Mother of the gods," "Great Mother," "Mistress of all," "Mother of the Blest," "Nourisher of all men," "the all-begetter." She is the mother of Zeus himself, and she is the great parent of all nature.[106] She is the goddess of the sexes. Maidens served her with dances, processions, and offerings. Magna Mater was a chaste goddess. She was beautiful and of wonderful intelligence in meeting the needs of her suffering subjects. She could communicate with them spiritually and satisfy the longings of the soul for communion with God.[107]

Isis was greatly admired by the women of Alexandria, and they wished to possess alike her beauty and intelligence. She was the goddess of mercy and love, and indulgent to human weakness. She cared for the health of her people and was especially skilled in the treatment of children, having gained her knowledge by devising charms and remedies for her infant son. To the suffering she came bringing words of magical power, and her mouth was full of the breath of life, her talisman vanquished the pains of sickness, and her words made to live again the throats of those who were dead.[108]

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[104] Loisy says in regard to women and their initiation: "L'exclusion des femmes fut de regle dans tout l'Occident. Toutefois un texte de Porphyre (De Abstin. IV, 16) affirme que les femmes pouvaient recevois certains dégres d'initiation. Il doit s'appliquer aux communates ou au moins à une partie des communates d'Orient, ou, dans les cités, les femmes participaient aussi en quelque mesure aux affaires publiques." Alfred Loisy, Les Mystères Païens et le Mystère Chrétien (Paris: Emily Nourry, 1919), p. 159. The same author says: "In places where women participated more in the life of the community, they received the title "hyena," according to Porphyry, "lion" according to an inscription at Tripoli in Africa." (P. 160.) Further evidence seems to be needed before we can say with any certainty that women were received and initiated.

[105] Pauly's Encyclopädie.

[106] Grant Showerman, "The Great Mother of the Gods," Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin, No. 43 (Madison, 1901), p. 234.

[107] Ibid., passim.

[108] Diodorus i. 25; cf. Jayne, The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilization, p. 66.

Suffering men and women are in need of suffering goddesses who can have sympathy and pity with them in their trials and sorrows. These goddesses have known themselves sorrow and suffering, mourning and weeping, laughter and rejoicing. The suffering goddesses touched a tender spot in the heart of every woman. Women had lost their husbands, like Isis, their lovers like Cybele, and children their fathers like Horus. Because they themselves have suffered, they are able to comfort and help those who suffer. Their love for children and care for them in sickness endeared them to every mother. Wives went to their temples when they wanted children, and they sought their help at childbirth. They were needed so often and so much. They had a mother's heart and were loved by every woman.

(2) The Oriental Mysteries claimed that their gods were able to procure victory in war. Mithra was in particular the god of war, and as such chiefly worshipped by soldiers, civil and military officials, servants of the government, et cetera. Mithra is the god of hosts, all-powerful in times of war, to his faithful ones. The blows of the enemies miss the mark because Mithra, sore incensed, receives them. To them that honor him and bring him their sacrificial libations, he assures victory.[109] Mithra loves the fight. He is riding in his war-chariot, supervising the struggle. He has a shield of gold, a thousand bows, with golden arrows, a thousand sharp lances, and a club of a hundred edges. Upon the ancestral spirits depends the life, power and permanent existence of the tribe. As war god Mithra is accompanied by the "fravasi'er," the manes, the ancestral spirits.

Mithra was called upon when they went out to war and to him was offered thanksgiving and praise after victory was won. The character of militant virtue was one of the chief attributes of Mithra. He was an unfailing help to mortals in their struggles, the protector of purity, the defender of truth. He gave victory in war, he gave victory over evil instincts, and over the temptations of the flesh. The austerities of the initiation were intended to give to the candidates moral courage and physical endurance.[110] He was the god of kings, and he granted them victories.

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[109] Zend Avesta, Yasht X.

[110] Harold R. Willoughby, Pagan Regeneration (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), pp. 145, 157.

They ruled by his grace, and he was the father of the dynasty.[111] Mithra was the "Sol Invictus." He was the invincible one. He never lost until he lost in the battle with Christianity. It was customary for the candidates at their initiation to put a crown on their head, and then put it off immediately with the words, "Mithra is my crown."[112] Mithra is the god of victory and help, whom one never invokes in vain. He assured them victory in the moral realm, and salvation both in this world and in that to come.

The Magna Mater was also the goddess of victory. She had proved herself a benefactress to the empire by giving victory to the Romans at a time of national danger. As such she was held in high honor and her cult favored above every other cult. Yes, the other cults came and sought protection under her wings. Valerius Maximus says that many commanders vowed pilgrimage to Pessinus, and Marius is said to have undertaken one.[113] It is also recorded of Serapis that many soldiers had avowed that Serapis had saved them from the dangers of the battle. Locrian and Thessalian soldiers called upon Serapis and Isis to save them from military disaster. In 168 B. C. several soldiers, returning from upper Egypt, stopped at Memphis, on the return journey, to give thanks to Serapis for having saved them from the perils of war.[114]

As gods and goddesses of war and of victory, the oriental gods won for themselves respect and gratitude and for their cult many devotees.

(3) The Oriental Mysteries honored the dead and exhibited a willingness to be of service to them.

"Death was the first mystery; it started man on the road to the other Mysteries."[115] Man's fate after death had become the one great interest in the Graeco-Roman world at this time. The Oriental Mysteries owe a great deal of their success to the fact that they took an interest in the dead and in life after death. The Mysteries made a very successful attempt to grapple with the mystery of death. We know their technique. Their gods had died and risen from death. Some of them were still on earth as gods, while some of them were chthonian gods, ruling in the Underworld. There was a life after death for the gods, and it was in their power to bestow immortality also upon mortal men. All the Oriental Mysteries to some extent took an interest in the dead, but the outstanding one in this respect was the Egyptian. We know that the Syrian Mysteries interested themselves in the departed ones. They provided the departing ones with a password to be used when they had to pass the stern guardians on the other side. Funeral offerings were placed upon their graves by their descendants.[116] The idea of a life beyond the grave held a much more prominent place among the Egyptians than it held among any other people of antiquity. Osiris was the god of the living, too; but it was as a champion and friend of the dead that he gained his great position in Egyptian religion. The early belief, that the dead lived in or at the tomb which must therefore be equipped with all the necessaries for the life to come, the Egyptians never really gave up. But at the same time they believed that the dead departed elsewhere to a distant and blessed realm. It was the sacred duty of every son to arrange for his father and mother for the life beyond, especially by the erection of the tombs. In Egypt it was the dead that ruled the living. The task of erecting the pyramids, as resting places for the kings, occupied tens of thousands of people for many years and was a tremendous undertaking. These pyramids have remained the marvels of every generation down to our own days.

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[111] Hugo Gressman, Die Orientalischen Religionen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1909), p. 141.

[112] Ludwig Deubner, "Die Bedeutung des Kranzes in Klassischen Altertum," Archiv für Religionswissenschaft (Leipzig, 1933), p. 78.

[113] Grant Showerman, The Great Mother of the Gods (Madison, Wisconsin, 1901), p. 256.

[114] Thomas Allan Brady, "The Reception of the Egyptian Cults by the Greeks," The University of Missouri Studies, X (1935), 12, 24, 28.

[115] Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1911), quoted from La cite antique, I, chap. ii, end, 99.

Through their care for the welfare of the dead in the realm beyond, the Oriental Mysteries endeared themselves to the living. Fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, friends and relatives all had some loved one that had gone to the other realm. The bereaved ones were not in a position to control the mysterious beyond. All they could do was to erect the tombs and offer the prescribed sacrifices. But the Mysteries had the magic power to do what they themselves could not do. Their gods were the sole rulers and judges of the Underworld, the place where the dead were supposed to go. Then they thought also of their own impending departure, and they naturally wanted to make the very best possible arrangement for that day, and so they joined the Mysteries.

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[116] Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 126.

(4) The Oriental Mysteries performed certain kinds of social service. The Oriental Mysteries were secret and mystic cults, to a large extent, but they did not favor withdrawal from the world. They were no anchorites, or recluses, indifferent to the world at large and to their own community in particular. People in general were living a life of drudgery and monotony. The Oriental Mysteries, except Mithraism, had their festivities and processions and ceremonies. These served as an outlet for their pent-up feelings and satisfied their craving for relaxation and pleasure. Men were attracted by their festivities, stirred by the magnificence of their processions, and fascinated by their intoxicating songs and melodies. The Syrian goddess had her theatres at Delos, at Baal-Sanien-a-Si, and elsewhere. We may with probability infer a dramatic re-enacting there of some part of the legends told by Lucian. To occupy the chief seats in those theatres, when a drama was played, was considered the greatest honor that could be given to anyone. Such an honor was bestowed only upon the most illustrious citizens.[117] Around the temples of the Syrian goddess were parks or zoological gardens, with all kinds of animals and pools, in which sacred fishes, whom no one dared to catch, were fed. Doves were sacred to her too. People went there to enjoy themselves and at the same time to add to their knowledge of the animal world.

The Anatolian Mysteries were very much more a municipal affair than the other Oriental cults. This was natural since the Magna Mater had early been given an outstanding part in the worship of Rome and her cult was directly under the supervision of the quindecimviri. She was considered almost as a state goddess, on account of the great service she had conferred upon the Roman empire in an hour of great crisis. To her honor were instituted a series of annual games, and occasionally banquets were given in commemoration of the coming of the Great Mother to Rome. Both games and banquets were very highly esteemed by all classes of people.[118] Priests had charge of banks in connection with the temples, in which people could deposit their money for safe keeping.[119] In the Roman provinces the dendrophori had charge of the work of our modern fire department.[120] Priests and votaries offered sacrifices for the emperors. If we add to this list the great service done to the empire and to the communities by strengthening the morale of the people and by ministering to their spiritual needs, it becomes clear that their services to society were by no means negligible or valueless. There can be no doubt that the Mysteries ingratiated themselves with the people and with the leaders by such services.

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[117] A. D. Nock, Conversion (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1935), p. 60.

(5) Mithraism sought to enlist men in the great battle for justice and truth.

According to the teachings of Mithraism, there are two camps in the world: one good and one evil, and there is a perpetual struggle between those two. The goal sought is the final disappearance of evil, and the uncontested dominion of the good. The demons, created by the infernal spirit, emerge from the abyss and roam the earth. They penetrate everywhere, carrying distress, corruption, sickness and death. The challenge to the true Mithraist was to fight the evil order and bring about the gradual triumph of Mithra. The believer was to be the assistant of the god in his work of purification and improvement.

Mithraism was a great religion. The god himself was young and beautiful, and brave, and pure. Mithraism taught an austere moral and practised it itself. When a man was initiated into the cult, it was said that he had enlisted for service in the holy war. A service oath engaged him for life service.[121] Mithra is the god of light, the sun-god. He is the conquering god, the one who loves the battle. Mithra, subduing the bull, is a symbol of the human "I impulse." As he slayed the bull, so ought those who have enlisted in his service to subdue their own lower impulses.[122]

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[118] Grant Showerman, The Great Mother of the Gods (Madison, Wisconsin, 1901), pp. 257, 250.

[119] Hugo Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1930), p. 88.

[120] F. Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 57.

[121] R. Reitzenstein, Die Hellenistischen Mysterien-religionen nach Ihren Grundgedanken und Wirkungen (Leipzig: B. G. Trubner, 1927), passim.

This enlistment for service in a holy war appealed to courageous men. It put a new evaluation upon man. Mithra had need of him. He was an important factor in the final outcome of the struggle. He counted for something, and he could accomplish something. It was to be a comradeship-in-arms; it was fellowship in joy and sorrow, in the din of battle and in final victory. Here we catch a little glimpse of personality. No other god ever before extended such a call, and no other religion had been engaged in such a holy war. While it is true that the enlisted man was expected to fight with and for his god, the necessary equipment and strength was to be supplied by Mithra. He was the invincible god, who never lost a battle, until he lost it to Christianity.

Mithraism had an interesting eschatology, which tells of the final victory of justice, truth, and righteousness. The termination of this world will come at the end of this aeon. Great plagues will precede the end, and a heavenly bull will appear. Mithra will return to earth and slay the bull. He will then raise the faithful from the dead and give to them the drink of immortality, prepared from the fat and the blood of the slain bull. Fire will consume the wicked, and Ahriman will be destroyed in the world-conflagration.[123] Those who enlisted in the service of the god will receive their reward and be with him forever.

Missionary Methods Employed by One, Two or Three of the Oriental Mystery Religions in the Early Roman Empire

The Oriental Mystery Religions impressed by public ceremonies and outward display.

This missionary method was in common use by the Syrian, Anatolian and Egyptian Mysteries. It was not used by the Persian. Mithraism was wholly a mystery cult, celebrated only by those who had been initiated. It was a closed brotherhood cult. They had no cult-drama, no public ceremonies, parades, or festivals to which the public had access. They employed other methods to interest the community and gain votaries.[124] Lucretius presents the picture of the Phrygian goddess, with her lions, and the Galli with their tympana, cymbals, and flutes. She is carried through the streets in triumph, herself and her attendants garlanded with roses, while gifts of silver and bronze are showered upon her.[125] Lucretius has for a moment made even us feel the thrill of the crowds, the still majesty of the image, the atmosphere which surrounded the procession, the enthusiasm and expectancy, that took hold of the thousands who lined the streets, and the participants who took part in the procession. In honor of the goddess, the Galli and others emasculated themselves publicly, thereby signifying that nothing was too precious to offer to the goddess. Under Emperor Claudius these dramatic processions and visible rituals became part of the State festivals and acquired new splendor.[126] The priests were dressed in motley costumes, loaded with jewelry, beating tambourines. There is a decree of Thuria, Messenia, of a certain Damocharis of Sparta, a benefactor of the city. He is granted various privileges and among them a front seat on the days of the Mysteries and a leading place in the procession with the officials, and a share in all the amenities.[127] The processions were in honor of the Syrian goddess. It was considered an honor to take part, and to have a leading part in them. Even officials participated.

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[122] Alfred Schütze, Mithras-Mysterien und Urchristentum (Stuttgart: Otto Weigelt, 1937), p. 43.

[123] Ibid., p. 54.

In Egypt the Isis-Osiris Mysteries enjoyed special favors, comparable to those of the Eleusinian Mysteries in Greece. Egypt seems to have been the home of religions. In the Pyramid Texts we find the earliest surviving pictures of a celestial hereafter, over five thousand years ago.[128] The phrase "Sun of Righteousness" the Hebrews borrowed from the Egyptians, who had it two thousand years before the Hebrews.[129] The earliest known discussion of right and wrong in the history of man is embedded in a Memphite drama, celebrating the supremacy of Memphis, and dating from the middle of the fourth millenium B. C.[130] In the twenty-third century B. C., an otherwise unknown king of Heracleopolis set forth to his son and successor the supreme value of character.[131] The idea of a judgment beyond the grave became more and more definite after 3000 B. C.[132] It was in this religiously saturated milieu that the Isis-Osiris Mysteries were born and grew up to manhood.

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[124] Alfred Loisy, Les Mystères Païens et le Mystère Chrétien (Paris: Emile Nourry, 1919), p. 159.

[125] Grant Showerman, "The Great Mother of the Gods," Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin, No. 43 (Madison, Wisconsin, 1901), p. 260.

[126] A. D. Nock, Conversion, p. 82. [127] Ibid., p. 60.

[128] James Henry Breasted, Dawn of Conscience (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 83.

[129] Ibid., p. 15.

The Egyptian Mysteries seem to have been more open to the public than any of the others. At dawn the statue of the divinity was uncovered and shown to the community in the "naos," that had been closed and sealed during the night. Then the priest lit the sacred fire and offered libations of water, supposed to be from the deified Nile, while he chanted the usual hymns to the sound of the flutes. The god is then awakened by calling his name, in the Egyptian language. He who knew the name of the god was obeyed as a slave the master.[133] The festivals of Isis were held from October 28 to November 3. The chief motif of the festival was a passion drama of the principal events in the life of Osiris: his struggles, his death, the search for and discovery of his body, and his resurrection. All was enacted with the aid of a large chorus. The mourning over the death of the god was followed by exultation over the finding of the god, and the triumph of life over death. These rejoicings lasted three days.[134] When the corpse had been properly embalmed, it was brought over to the Island of Death with proper ceremonies. Thirty-four papyrus boats served as an honorary escort for the dead god. Each boat carried an image of the god and was adorned with 365 lights. It was an ostentatious voyage of the gods, which ceremony every time made the heart of the Egyptians grieved and joyous at the same time. In every house lamps were lit. It was the festival of "the burning lights."[135] All these cultic ceremonies were attractive, fascinating, and impressive in dignity and solemnity. They served as a constant reminder of their religion and was an effective missionary method. As late as 394 A. D. the Isis-processions marched the streets of Rome. The Serapeum of Alexandria was destroyed in 391 A. D. The Isis-Osiris Mysteries which had served their days and generations for millenniums disappeared from the religious stage.[136]

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[130] Ibid., p. 19. [131] Ibid., p. 20. [132] Ibid., p. 21.

[133] Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1911), p. 95.

[134] Walter Addison Jayne, The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilization (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), p. 482.

[135] Hugo Gressmann, "Tod und Auferstehung des Osiris," Der Alte Orient (Leipzig: Hinrichssche Buchhandlung, 1923), p. 38.

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[136] Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1911), p. 85.

CHAPTER V

THE RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL GROUP

History and Spread of the Greek Philosophies

Philosophy (φιλοσωφία) according to its definition, is the love of wisdom and may be said to be in general the mind's search for truth and unity. Tradition assigns to Pythagoras the first employment of the word. With him it meant the pursuit of knowledge. Plato distinguished philosophers as those who are able to grasp the eternal and immutable.

If we regard philosophy as the quest for the unity and ground of things, then it had its home originally in Greece. No race and no civilization can lay claim to having a monopoly on philosophy. Adaptation and cross-fertilization has taken place but no wholesale borrowing. In fact, the great philosophies of the world started and blossomed out almost simultaneously in China, India, Persia, and Greece. In the systematization of the Occidental and Oriental philosophies much assimilation, within or outside the respective culture-areas, naturally took place. The sixth century B. C. was in many respects a remarkable century. For one thing it saw the beginning of a whole variety of philosophies as far apart as Greece and China. We may recall such names as Confucius and Laotze in China, Gautama in India, Zoroaster in Persia, the prophet Isaiah, "the great unknown," in Israel, and Thales, Anaximander, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Democritus, et cetera, the forerunners of the great Socrates, in Greece. It was springtime for the philosophies, and they blossomed out wherever the climate was favorable.

In Greece, Socrates is the all-important name. He had only a few forerunners, but many followers. He never had an organized following of his own. There never was a "Socratism," as there was a Platonism, a Stoicism, an Epicureanism, et cetera, but the philosophy of Socrates influenced them all to such an extent that it may be said without Socrates there would have been no Platonism, no Stoicism, no Cynicism. It was not only the teaching of Socrates that wielded such a tremendous influence, but also his own life and example and his courageous death as a martyr for his belief. His method of teaching humbled and antagonized some during his lifetime, but after his martyr-death, it was all forgotten and the content of his teaching, the life he led, and the way he passed out of this life stood out in bold relief.

Some philosophical schools were, from their inception, almost entirely philosophical and continued to be so to the end; while others assimilated to themselves so many religious elements that they may properly be styled religio-philosophical schools. The dividing lines are not always easy to draw, as they often run into one another, and no philosophy is chemically pure from religious elements.

The subject we have chosen for our thesis: "Missionary Methods of the Religions in the Early Roman Empire" completely eliminates some of the philosophical groups, whether we like it or not. Some are eliminated by the time limit, others because they cannot be classified under the category "religions," or because they were not missionary religions. Sophism and Epicureanism exclude themselves, because of their negative or hostile attitude toward religion. Aristotelianism and Platonism did not at this time exert the tremendous influence they did in later centuries, especially upon Christian thinking. The followers of Socrates did not form any special philosophical school, called after their master. Socrates, though, deserves an honorable mention here because of his mighty influence upon every philosophical thought after him.

Thus by the process of elimination there remain for our consideration: the Cynics, the Stoics, and with certain reservation, the Neo-Platonists. The question that may be raised in regard to Neo-Platonism is the comparative lateness of its emergence. It came into being in Egypt, during the third century A. D. These three philosophical groups contained religious elements to such an extent that they may be classified as religions. Furthermore, they were missionary religions, active in the early Roman Empire. Their inclusion in our discussion has been prompted by their activities in time, their religious content and their missionary interest.

Socrates' dates are somewhat uncertain, but there is general agreement that they fall somewhere around 469-399 B. C. He was an Athenian philosopher. All the Greek philosophies that have permanently influenced the world attach themselves ultimately to him. His outstanding characteristics were his ethical spirit, his religious reverence, his psychological standpoint, his regard for experience and concrete fact, and his distinctly practical cast of mind. He turned men's thoughts from the study of matter and mechanical causes to self-reflection, or the study of the mind. Cicero puts it rhetorically thus: "Socrates was the first to call down philosophy from heaven, and to place it in cities, and to introduce it into the houses of men, compelling men to examine into life and morals, and good and evil."[1] He reasoned on Theistic lines, basing his conception of God and God's providence on theology, or the marks of design manifest in the universe. His idea of the soul and of immortality exerted a great influence. He tried to ground virtue in utility, to estimate it by its consequences. That alone is good, which is good for someone, or which serves some end: "A dung-basket, that serves its purpose is more beautiful than an unserviceable shield of gold."[2]

The real Socrates was characterized by religious reverence and personal piety. It is a remarkable fact that he should have thrown out so many fruitful and suggestive thoughts as to be virtually the founder of all the leading post-Socratic schools: Platonic, Peripatetic, Cynic, Cyrenaic, Megaric, Stoic, and Epicurean alike.[3] All derived their impulse directly or indirectly from him; and each claimed for its own tenets a basis in the Socratic teaching. Plato concludes his Phaedo with the sentence: "Such was the end, ECHECRATES, of our friend, concerning whom I may truly say, that of all the men of his time, whom I have known, he was the wisest and justest and best."

The Cynics trace their history back to Socrates through his pupil Antisthenes (444-365 B. C.), who traditionally is credited with being the founder of the Cynic school of philosophy. He was born at Athens and had a Thracian mother. He taught in dialogue form, like his master. He wore a cloak, carried a staff and a wallet, and his costume became the uniform of his followers. The Cynics originally emphasized virtue for its own sake. The virtuous man is self-sufficient. The supreme object of man is a virtuous life. But the ideal of virtue is freedom from all desire. The complete withdrawal of the individual within himself. The truly wise man is independent of everything--of marriage, society, and station. He needs neither wealth, honor, or pleasure.

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[1] Cicero Tusculan Disputations. v. 4.

[2] See Xenophon Memorabilia. iv. 6.

[3] William L. Davidson, The Stoic Creed (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1907), p. 11.

An outstanding character in the early history of the Cynics is Diogenes. He was born at Sinope in Bithynia, 412 B. C. and died at Corinth 323 B. C., the same day Alexander the Great died at Babylon. Diogenes is the typical figure of the Cynics. He met Alexander the Great when he was visiting Corinth. "Can I do anything for you?" asked Alexander. And back came the curt answer: "Stand a bit out of the light, will you." Alexander was evidently very much impressed and said: "If I were not Alexander, I'd like to be Diogenes." Diogenes is famed for living in a tub and walking the streets by daylight, lantern in hand, looking for someone worthy to be called man. Life had not always dealt easy with him. In his youth he ran away to Athens, where he had the good fortune of becoming a pupil of Antisthenes. Later, when crossing to the Island of Aegina, he was captured by pirates and sold as a slave. He was later freed. Virtue for him consisted in the avoidance of all physical pleasure. Pain and hunger were positively helpful in the pursuit of goodness, and morality, in so far as they implied a return to nature.

Crates of Thebes was a pupil of Diogenes. Crates married a wealthy Thracian lady. But in accordance with his principles, he sacrificed his wealth and gave up his life to the attainment of virtue and the propagation of ascetic self-control. The date of his death is unknown. He became the connecting link between Socrates and the Stoics and considerably influenced Stoicism. Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, was his pupil.

The Cynics flourished for about a century after the death of Socrates (399-299 B. C.), but after the rise of Stoicism, Cynicism went into eclipse for nearly three centuries, until its reappearance in Roman Imperial times in the form of Neo-Cynicism. Many factors contributed to this eclipse. Cynicism lacked cohesion and organic unity. Each one went his own way in complete detachment. Its teaching was austere and its methods harsh. After having contributed to Stoicism some of its most valuable elements, Cynicism went into a temporary hibernation. It survived sporadically almost as a mendicant order.

Then after three centuries it reappeared in Rome, with Demetrius, a contemporary of Seneca. Demetrius hailed from Sunium and taught at Corinth and Rome during the reigns of Caligula, Nero, and Vespasian. Caligula wishing to gain his friendship sent him a large present. Demetrius replied in sending it back: "If Caligula had intended to bribe me, he should have offered mè his crown." He must have been a man of character. He could not be tempted with small things. It is therefore not strange that he was highly respected and gained many influential friends. Seneca was one of them. Other influential men among the Neo-Cynics were Oenamaus and Demonax. Of the first one little needs to be said. He rejected with scorn the anthropomorphic fables of paganism, and attacked fiercely the faith in oracles and divination. Demonax, on the other hand, earned for himself the epithet, "The Saint of Cynicism." Demonax was mild and humane, but also firm and unbending. He refused to offer sacrifices or even to seek initiation in the Mysteries of Eleusis. When he was impeached before the Athenian court, he replied that as for sacrifices, the Deity had no need of them, and that concerning the Mysteries, he was in this dilemma: "If they contained a revelation good for man, he was duty bound to publish it; if they were bad and worthless, he would feel equally bound to warn the people against the fraud."[4]

The Neo-Cynics had very little in common with the earlier Cynics. They were individualists and chiefly interested in philosophy for its own sake. The Neo-Cynics were more of a social and spiritual movement than a philosophical school of the Hellenic type. Cynic individualism fell into the background and became a Cynic ideal in public as well as in personal affairs. Outworn methods were exchanged for new and up-to-date ones and doctrinal excrescences were sloughed off and popular religious elements added. After going through such an outward and inner reformation, Cynicism set out on a new missionary career. The Cynic missionary became a familiar figure. He lived in face of the public, and he became a "door-opener." The missionaries traversed the empire, and there are frequent references to them in contemporary literature. They preached counsel and reproof. They spoke of the divine element in the human spirit and of the "wise man," et cetera. They professed to fulfil a mediatorial office, and they preached the necessity of penitence and remorse for sin. They stressed morality and social and political regeneration.

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[4] Luc. Dem. c. 11; Oenom. Fr. 13; cf. Jacob Bernays, Lucian und die Kyniker (Berlin: Wilhelm Hertz, 1879), pp. 27, 33, 57, 95, 104.

Dion Chrysostom is critical of the Cynics and speaks of them with asperity, but he adopted many of their ways. Epictetus, although a Stoic in theory, was deeply affected by Cynicism in practice. He speaks of the Cynics as "Athletes of righteousness." The Neo-Cynic movement seems to have attained its crests immediately after the death of Nero and again under the Antonines. A large part of the devotees of Cynicism and a considerable number of their celebrated leaders came from the outskirts of Hellenic culture: Pontus, Thrace, Syria, Pamphylia, and Egypt.

The name Cynic (κύων) is likely derived from the gymnasium Cynosarges (κυνόσαργες - white dog) which the Cynics frequented; although the personal habits and temper of the Cynics went far to justify opponents in applying the term as though it were derived from κύων, a dog. The Cynics surpassed all others in audacity, coarseness, and immodesty.

Stoicism owes its name to the porch (στόα) from which Zeno, the founder, delivered his lectures. Stoicism was an offshoot from Cynicism, but indirectly its origin may be traced back to Socrates. Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, was born at Citium, in Cyprus, 336 B. C. His father was a merchant of purple. Zeno was at least half Semitic. It is said that Phoenician blood was running in his veins. All the great missionary religions of today are of Semitic origin.[5] The Semites have a genius for religion. Nevertheless, the teaching of Stoicism was originally formulated at Athens, was addressed to Greeks, was cast in Hellenic mould and nurtured under Hellenic patronage. When it first saw the light, at the end of the fourth century B. C., it came to a declining people.

Zeno's father was a great traveller and he used to bring home from Athens "Socratic books," which were eagerly devoured by

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[5] Buddhism was once upon a time a strong missionary religion, but today it has to a very large extent lost its missionary fervor and does not attempt to conquer new territories, but lays stress upon consolidating the gains already made.

Zeno. When Zeno finally had an opportunity to go to Athens for the pursuance of his studies, he attached himself to Crates of Thebes, a worthy representative of the Cynic school. Zeno became a Cynic. But about 300 B. C. he founded a school of his own. It was founded on the dogma of complete harmony (ὁμολογία), in God, in the universe, and in man. Zeno had a deep religious spirit and he led an austere and simple life. In philosophy he was an eclectic. He learned something and assimilated something from every school he came in contact with: Cynic, Megaric, Peripatetic, Academic. His ethical system was based on the "ideal wise man." He was tolerant to other schools, with one exception. He objected vigorously to the Epicureans' explanation of the nature and constitution of the universe and to their theory that pleasure was the highest good.

Stoicism, from its inception (300 B. C.) down through its history to about 300 A. D., is designated the "Older Stoa," and the "Middle Stoa," for the Greek period, and the "Later Stoa," for the Roman period.

Zeno's successor was Cleanthes of Assos (301-232 B. C.), originally a boxer. Among his pupils were Antigonus, king of Macedon, and Chrysippus, his successor in the school. He is probably best known for his "Hymn to Zeus," quoted by Paul in his speech on Mars Hill in Athens.[6] This hymn is not only the prototype of Hellenistic hymnology, but also a fairly complete summary of Stoic theory of religious worship. Cleanthes is the theologian of the school.

The third great leader of the "Older Stoa" was Chrysippus (280-206 B. C.), a native of Soli in Cilicia. He is the great systematizer. He took the doctrines of Zeno and Cleanthes and crystallized them into a definite system and defended them against attacks. He is so important for Stoicism, that it has been said "without Chrysippus there would have been no 'porch.'"

These three great founders contributed each one his share to the upbuilding of Stoicism. To Zeno the school is indebted for its general physical theory, for the uncompromising purity of its ethics and the demand for "plain living and high thinking."

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[6] Acts 17:28. "As certain of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring." Paul uses poets in plural and may have in mind both Aratus of Soli, in Cilicia (third century B. C.) and Cleanthes.

Cleanthes stands conspicuous as the religious interpreter of its physics, poetically expressed, calm, contemplative, deeply reverential and devoutly submissive to the world-order. The logician par excellence is Chrysippus--systematizing, safeguarding, and controverting. All three regarded ethics as supreme, but the other two disciplines (logic and physics) were enthusiastically cultivated.

For a New Testament scholar it may be of interest to note that the fourth and the sixth leader of the school, Zeno and Antipater, were both natives of Tarsus. This city, the birthplace of the great apostle Paul, was one of the strongholds of Stoicism. Stoicism was the philosophy of the town and the schools. During the formative years of the "Apostle to the Gentiles" and afterwards, this was not without its great significance.

By the presidents of the Middle Stoa the fundamental doctrines were accepted, carried forward, modified or transformed. Two names in particular have importance here, namely, Panaetius and his learned successor, Posidonius. These two leaders mark the transition to the Roman period, for both were instrumental in the propagation of Stoicism in the Roman world. They were both eclectics and both directly influenced distinguished Romans, such as Cicero. To Panaetius of Rhodes (about 180-111 B. C.) may roundly be ascribed the merit of having rendered Stoicism palatable and a potent working system, and of having introduced it into Rome. He rid the system of the incubus of divination and he expressed advanced views on the existence of the gods and the theology of the day. He reshaped ethics so as to make it really helpful in the formation of character. Posidonius of Apamea in Syria, about 130-50 B. C., was a rhetorician of the ornate stamp. Posidonius was the teacher of Cicero, when he visited Rhodes. Pompey also attended his lectures. Strabo calls him the most learned man of his times.

From this transitional period of the Middle Stoa, we come to the Later Stoa, or the Roman Period. It is important for us to bear in mind that Stoicism underwent a radical transformance in being transferred to Roman soil. Instead of being, as it originally was, a theory of ideal virtue it became in the hands of its Roman representatives a doctrine of deliverance and redemption. While the earlier Stoics were occupied with theoretic questions as to the ideal of wisdom, its adherents in Rome were more concerned with the practical realization of wisdom. Roman Stoicism did give real content and value to the incipient notion of the brotherhood of man, inherited from the Cynics. Stoicism in the Roman Empire showed how high Paganism at its best could reach.[7]

It is impossible for us to follow in any detail the intricate evolution of Stoicism in this later and third period, or to give all the names of its leaders and prominent adherents. The best we can do is to mention a few of the most eminent Romans who were either professed members or sympathetic in the main to its teachings. Scipio Africanus formed a lasting friendship with Panaetius. Horace and Virgil were both influenced by the school, and Hadrian, the most fascinating and enigmatic of Roman emperors, was interested in it. Cicero was officially an adherent of the old Academy, but found much in Stoicism to arouse his sympathies. Attalus and Musonius held revival meetings that had a tremendous influence.[8] Musonius especially was more a "physician of souls" than a speculative philosopher. He taught the forgiveness of injuries, and gentleness to wrongdoers.

There are three men, though, of whom we know more than the rest of the great leaders. They were miles apart in social standing: Marcus Aurelius was Roman Emperor, Seneca, philosopher-statesman, and Epictetus, a slave-philosopher. Nothing speaks more significantly of the all-pervading influence of Stoicism than the life story and writings of these three men. All had found in Stoicism an elevating and ennobling power which gave to them a new vision in life and made them think purer thoughts, perform kinder deeds, and wield a greater influence for good in the world.

Seneca was born in Cordoba, in Spain, about the beginning of the Christian era. His father was a rich man of equestrian rank. His mother seems to have been a very good woman. In Rome he came under the influence of the teacher Attalus and received an impression for life. From 41-49 A. D. he was exiled to Corsica by Emperor Claudius. In 49 A. D. he became tutor of Nero. When

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[7] B. D. Alexander, A Short History of Philosophy (Glasgow: Jackson, Wylie and Company, 1934), p. 140.

[8] Samuel Dill, Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius (London: Macmillan and Company, 1925), p. 348.

Claudius died, in 54, Seneca and Burrus became the guardians of the Emperor, and virtually ruled the Empire. It was a position of great difficulty. Seneca grew to be immensely wealthy. This aroused the jealousy of Nero. Seneca attempted in vain to get his former pupil to change his evil ways, but all was in vain. A man like Nero, who without any scruples cold-bloodedly could murder his brother and his mother, would have no scruples at all to end the life of his teacher and prime minister. Waiting for the death summons, Seneca used his time in writing philosophy; and when the summons came he at once opened his veins and died as heroically as he had lived. Seneca was a moral philosopher, hortatory, edifying, full of sage counsel, clothed in graceful language, with a "tendency to prolixity." His teaching is clearly tinged with the shrewd common sense of the Roman statesman and politician. He represents God as a moral and spiritual being, a beneficient Providence, with fatherly regard for the human race.[9]

Epictetus was the son of a slave woman and for many years a slave himself. He was born at Hierapolis in Phrygia, and the span of his life falls between 50-130 A. D. His master, Epaphroditus, a freed-man of Nero, gave the young slave a liberal education. His teacher was Musonius, the philosopher. Epictetus later took up a position as teacher in Rome. Young men from all parts of the empire listened to his teaching, and men of rank and position sought his advice. When Domitian expelled the philosophers from Rome, Epictetus went to Nicopolis in Epirus. There he lived, and taught, lame, poor, and old. Arrian, his pupil, took down his lectures in writing, in the years of Trajan. In his philosophy, he was primarily the healer of souls. His message was more to the moral sense than to the intellect. His vocation was to arouse the conscience, to awaken a conviction of sin, to turn men from wickedness and to point them to happiness and peace.

Marcus Aurelius was the Roman emperor from 161-180 A. D. His ancestors, although of Italian stock, came from Spain. He wrote his meditations in Greek, in spite of the fact that Latin was his mother-tongue. His summary of a good life is: "To reverence the gods and help men." In him we see for the first time Plato's desire fulfilled--a philosopher on the throne. He was a good man, whose influence reaches down to our own time. He was practically the last of the Stoics and in some respects the best. After his time the growing sect of Christians, whom he persecuted, became more and more the physicians of souls in the Roman empire. The Stoic philosophy was adopted and invigorated by the Christians. Stoicism did not pass out of existence. The philosophical cast served Christianity very well for several centuries, with a new Christian content added to it.

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[9] His brother Gallio was governor of Achaia (See Acts 18: 12-17).

Stoicism was a grand philosophical system. Of all the philosophical systems in the Roman Empire no other exerted such a pronounced influence upon its age. Being a philosophy, with strong religious elements, its sphere of influence was somewhat limited, to the educated and philosophically minded. It never really penetrated down to the lower strata of society. It was more a religion for the upper classes. This is probably more true of the earlier years of its history than of the Roman period, when strong effort was put forth to make it a popular, philosophical movement.

During the Roman period ethics was pursued with unflagging energy, and both logic and physics were thrown into the background. Pantheism of the Older Stoics tended steadily to theism. The Universe is constantly personalized, and the Deity is spoken of as Creator, Father, Guardian, and men are viewed as his sons. Thus the goodness as well as the majesty and might of the Supreme Cause is recognized. The God "with whom we have to do" becomes to the later Stoics a living, actuating presence. Cosmopolitanism of the Stoics now attains a warmth and an intensity that it did not possess before, and the desire to reclaim and to reform mankind sent forth the Stoics as missionaries and moral preachers to distant parts of the great Roman Empire. The reformed and rejuvenated Greek philosophy spread not only westward to Rome, but eastward and southward to Syria and Egypt, and in every direction it went it assumed a religious character.

The non-Hellenic nationality of the leading Stoics is, indeed, noteworthy. Zeno himself was from Citium, a Phoenician colony in Cyprus, and he belonged to the Semitic race. Of his disciples Herillus was from Carthage, Athenadoras from Tarsus, and Cleanthes from Assus in the Troad. The chief disciples of Cleanthes were Sphaerus of the Bosporus, and Chrysippus from Soli, in Cilicia. Chrysippus was succeeded by Zeno of Sidon, and

Diogenes of Babylon; the latter taught Antipater of Tarsus, who taught Panaetius of Rhodes, who taught Posidonius of Apamea in Syria. The names of Nestor, Athenodorus Cordylion, and Heraclides may be added to the Stoical teachers furnished by Tarsus.

This catalogue could be considerably enlarged and still present an Oriental aspect. Not a single Stoic of note was a native of Greece proper.[10] This gives us an insight into the widespread expansion of this religio-philosophical system.

The Neo-Pythagoreans and the Neo-Platonists. Pythagoreanism as a philosophical school lasted but a short time. It died in a kind of nuptial flight, after fertilizing the mind of Plato, and probably of Socrates, too. It was a religious brotherhood inspired by the Orphic Mysteries. After appropriating much from Platonic and contemporary Stoic thought it revived again in the second century B. C. This revival of Neo-Pythagoreanism as a philosophy seems to have begun in Alexandria and to have spread from there to Rome. Among these early Neo-Pythagoreans we may mention, Apollonius of Tyana, also celebrated as a healer and worker of miracles, and Moderatus of Gades. Apollonius, a somewhat mythical figure, travelled widely, moving from temple to temple, exciting a religious revival by his preaching. He stressed prayer and mystic communion with God.

Neo-Platonism is of comparatively late origin, but as it exercised no small influence in the latter part of the third century A. D., and in the earliest years of the fourth century, it is proper to include it in our discussion.

The originator of Neo-Platonism seems to have been Ammonius Saccas, who taught at Alexandria in the first half of the third century A. D. Ammonius had a number of famous pupils, Plotinus, "The greatest thinker between Aristotle and Spinoza," Origen, the famous Christian philosopher, and Longinus, who wrote commentaries on the Phaedo and the first part of the Timaeus. Plotinus studied under Ammonius for eleven years. In the year 244 he went to Rome where his success as a teacher was immediate. He quickly gathered about himself a band of eminent disciples, which came eventually to include the Emperor Gallienus and the Empress

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[10] William L. Davidson, The Stoic Creed (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1907), pp. 169 f.

[11] B. A. G. Fuller, A History of Philosophy (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1938), p. 282.

Salonina. His influence with the Imperial couple was great. It has been suggested that Gallienus' toleration of the Christians and personal guarantee of protection were due to Plotinus' intercession on their behalf. By nature Plotinus was a religious mystic of the first order. His pupil and biographer, Porphyry, tells us that four times in a state of ecstacy he was made one with God.

Neo-Platonism spread itself wherever the Greek tongue was spoken, but with its extension its decline went hand in hand. Compared with Cynicism and Stoicism, the Neo-Pythagoreans and the Neo-Platonists exerted a comparable insignificant influence. For one thing, the time was too short before everything had to give way for the mighty onrushing of Christianity, and for another thing, the common people were interested in popular religion, not in philosophical discussions.

The philosophies were handicapped in that they lacked solidarity, continuity and organization. They were very successful in breaking down superstition, idolatry, and magics, but not so successful in building up an organization which could hold its own in competition with other philosophical groups and religions.

Attractive Features of the Religio-Philosophical Group

(1) They emphasized the importance of man and the good life. The central theme of the philosophies was man. This was true of Stoicism, Cynicism, Neo-Pythagoreanism, and Neo-Platonism even in their reformed state. Judaism and Christianity claimed to be "revealed religions." It was through knowing God and his purpose with man that Jews and Christians learned to know man. The central theme in their missionary message was God and man's relationship to him. In the Mystery Religions the Savior-gods occupied the central place in all of them. Salvation lay in a mystical union with the gods, not in anything man could do.

The God of the Jews and the God of the Christians was actively seeking man, calling him to repentance and faith. In the philosophical groups, it was man that was seeking after God, without any definite assurance that he had found him. At times man seems to have found him, only to lose him in the very next moment. Consequently man was always seeking to find God, to find the good life, and to find himself and his right place in life.

In the Mysteries the gods did it all, without man's active coöperation. All that man needed to do was to be initiated into the mysteries and to participate in some sacramental acts. In the philosophies it went to the other extreme. Here everything depended upon man. He had to do the seeking, and the finding, and the interpreting. That is why we claim that the central theme of the philosophies was man.

Man and the good life may be profitably viewed from two different angles, what the good life is, and what it is not; what to do and what to avoid. Viewed negatively, there are many things that are harmful or inimical to the good life, or as the philosophers themselves express it, to "happiness."

Things positively evil in themselves and harmful to the good life are to be avoided at all cost. Such things are: injustice, cowardice, disorderliness, folly, jealousy, rivalry, anger, hatred, and passions of every kind. "Passions make it impossible for us ever to listen to reason."[12] "For where there are disturbances and griefs, and fears, and unsuccessful avoidances, and envies, and jealousies, where is there in the midst of all this a place for happiness to enter?"[13] These things are not only enemies of the good life, but they are ugly in themselves, and happiness cannot thrive where they have dominion. They are not in harmony with nature and the constant advice to men was to live a "life in agreement with nature." (κατὰ φύσιν).

Then there are other things which may be called "indifferent" or "neutral." They are in themselves neither good nor evil. They may contribute either to happiness or to misery; as wealth, fame, health, strength, and the like. It is possible to be happy without having these, although, if they are used in a certain way, such use of them tends to happiness or misery. Of things "indifferent," as they express it, some are "rejected," others "preferred." Such as have value are "preferred," while such as have negative instead of positive value are "rejected." The philosophers define value as any contribution to harmonious living and to a life according to nature. Things of the "preferred" class are those which have positive value, such as, natural ability, skill, moral improvement, life, health, strength, beauty, wealth, fame, noble birth, and the like.

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[12] Epictetus iii. 2, 3.

[13] *Ibid*., pp. 22, 61.

Their advice to the people was: Flee from things that are evil in themselves and harmful to the good life. Use the "indifferent" things in such a way as to increase your own happiness and that of others! Do not be a slave under material things! Dispense with them if they prove harmful to you; exercise them, if useful! Rise above the circumstances! Live in agreement with nature!

On the positive side the good life is a virtuous life. All good, all happiness, all virtue consist in being in harmony with law; just as all evil, misery, and vice consist in violation or defiance of law. If we ask, what does it mean to "live in conformity with nature"? the answer is threefold: to be virtuous and happy, man must conform to the law of his own nature; to the law which holds society together; and to the law of Providence. A man is happy and good in proportion to the degree in which, under the guidance of reason, he accomodates himself to the law of his nature, the law of society, and the law of Providence. As virtue is the supreme aim of man, happiness must not be sought for itself. Pleasure and pain are really accidents, or at least incidents, in his experience, to be met by the wise man with indifference. All material good or evil, wealth or poverty, can neither add to nor detract from the soul, and are, therefore, to be despised.

Amongst the virtues, some are primary and some are subordinate. The following are the primary: wisdom, courage, justice, and temperance. Wisdom they define as the knowledge of things good and evil, and of what is neither good nor evil. Courage is knowledge of what we ought to choose, what we ought to beware of, and what is indifferent. Particular virtues are magnanimity, continence, endurance, presence of mind, good counsel, et cetera.

"There is no philosophy without virtue; there is no virtue without philosophy," said Seneca.[14] Herein he expressed truly the most earnest thought of his own age and the next, as to the boundless expectations philosophy had aroused in its votaries. They spoke much of the "Wise Man," as a pattern to follow. But that perfectly "Wise Man" never came in flesh and blood. They spoke of him, but he was nowhere to be found. The high expectations were never fulfilled. This moral code was a high and lofty one. But man was weak and powerless to attain to it. Virtue for virtue's sake! Do not expect any recompense!

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[14] Sen. Ep. 89. 6.

> When you have done a kind act to a man, what more do you want? Isn't it enough, that you have acted in accord with your own nature? Are you looking for a reward of your act? As if the eye should ask to be paid for seeing, or the feet for walking? For just as eyes and feet were made for a particular service, and by doing that particular service came into their own, so a man was created by nature to do good; and when he has done a good action, or something that contributes to the general good, he has done what nature created him to do, and he has come into his own.[15]

The virtuous man is the good man, and "no good man is without a God."[16] In order to enjoy the good life, man must be right with himself, right with his brother, and right with God. He must not shirk any of the duties he has to God, to man, or to himself. The good life was the best possible life for man. It was the kind of life everybody was wishing for. Herein lay the strong appeal, when the philosophical missionary came around, proclaiming the good life to be the virtuous and the moral life.

(2) Their emphasis upon the solidarity of mankind and the fact of human brotherhood. Man was originally, according to Zeno, formed out of the divine substance, and con-substantial with the divine. Man's relation to the divine is shown especially in the soul of man. Man's reason is a ray of celestial fire, a spark from the primal ether, which Zeno gives to every man for his controller and governor.[17]

> And from Him [God] have descended the seeds, not only to my father and my grandfather, but to all things that have been begotten and are nourished on the earth, but chiefly to those that possess reason, for these alone are privileged by nature to hold communion with God, being united with him in intercourse through reason: Why may not a man then call himself a citizen of the world? Why not a Son of God?[18]

From this doctrine of man's origin from the Divine, follows naturally another doctrine, namely the universal brotherhood of man. "We are made for co-operation," says Marcus Aurelius, "like the feet, the hands, the eyelids, the upper and the lower rows of teeth."[19] It was this sentiment of universal brotherhood, prompted by true altruistic motive, that broke down the distinctions of caste among the Stoics, putting Epictetus, the lame slave, on a level with Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emperor, and enabled Aurelius himself to work steadily towards the realization of his own ideal.

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[15] Marcus Aurelius ix. 42. 5; cf. Henry Dwight Sedgwick, Marcus Aurelius (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), p. 30.

[16] Epictetus. 73. 15, 16; cf. T. R. Glover, The Conflict of the Religions in the Early Roman Empire (London: Methuen and Company, 1909), p. 61.

[17] Aurelius Med. v. 27; Epictetus Diss. 1. 3.

[18] Epictetus Diss. 1. 9.

Morality now became the chief concern of life, for morality was essentially social. No cramped, stunted ethics was offered to mankind, but an expansive ethics, social and universal. Stoicism showed a distinct parallel to Christianity in this respect. Both ascribed man's dignity and worth to a divine, creative act in time, and to the fact that men are children of the one great Father. "For we also," said Cleanthes, "are Thy offspring." As another consequence of their appreciation of man's worth they maintained an indissoluble connection between ethics and religion. The law of the universe, they held, is the law of God. Heracleitus said: "All human laws are nurtured by the one divine law." This was not a mere sentiment with the Stoics, but a living, operative principle, turned to great use. It was embodied by the Emperor Aurelius in his state legislation.

From the doctrine of universal brotherhood, there was only a very short step to the doctrine of benevolence and brotherly helpfulness. We are told that Dion Chrysostom taught the people of Ephesus the duty of brotherly helpfulness by employing the parable of the sparrow, who by his twitter called his brethren to a heap of spilt grain. "Nature," says Seneca, "bids me be of use to men, no matter whether they are slave or free, freedmen or free-born. Wherever there is a human being, there is room for benevolence."[20] Persistent kindness conquers the bad, and no one is so hard-hearted, so hostile to what he should value, that even to his own hurt he refuses to love good men.[21] "Make the most of a short life; let it be peaceful both for yourselves and others! See that you are beloved by all while you live, and regretted when you die."[22] This help and service was interpreted to mean not merely external aid, but the effort to teach, admonish, and reform others, a task beset with difficulties, calling for tact and even temper, and the gift of sweet reasonableness. That we must love the sinner and try earnestly to improve him is a favorite thought of the Stoic emperor. He says that

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[19] Aurelius Med. ii. 1.

[20] Seneca De Vita Beata. 24. 3.

[21] Seneca De Ben. vii. 31. 1.

> it is man's special gift to love even those who fall into blunders; this takes effect the moment we realize that men are brothers, that sin is of ignorance and unintentional, that in a little while we shall both be dead, that above all, no injury is done us; our inner self is not made worse than it was before. Men exist for one another. Teach them then to bear with one another.[23]

Even the gods have charity for such men, giving them divers things, health, wealth, and reputation. You can do the same. What hinders you?[24] If a man is mistaken, reason with him kindly and point out his misconception. If you fail, blame yourself or no one. Reverence the gods; help men.[25]

In the face of so much evidence, it would be blind prejudice to deny that the Stoics preached philanthropy in a high and noble form. The rich were rigorously taught their duty to society and to the poor, and they improved upon the lesson. There was undoubted softening of the Roman character. The Stoic lawyers were giving expression to cultivated moral feeling, in a more liberal recognition of the natural rights of the weak and the oppressed, of women, and of slaves. The Stoics, with the exception of Epictetus, originally a slave, did not overtly condemn slavery as an institution, but accepted it. Nevertheless, their predominant altruism led them to treat slaves with great humaneness and consideration, looking upon them as friends and brothers.

The brotherhood of man, so conspicuous in the teachings of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, made a strong appeal to all classes in the Roman Empire. It was proclaimed with equal vigor by the philosopher on the throne and by the one who only yesterday was a slave himself. The philosophers by reasoning discovered that all men were brothers. And as such they ought to live together in peace and harmony and practice benevolence and brotherly love.

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[22] Seneca _De Ira_. iii. 43. 1.

[23] Marcus Aurelius vii. 22; viii. 59.

[24] _Ibid_., ix. 11. [25] _Ibid_. viii. 17.

(3) Their emphasis upon man's close relationship with God. One main difficulty in determining precisely the philosophic missionary's conception of the nature of God arises from the fact that apart from the philosophical concept of Deity, he also accepted the popular notion of the existence of "the gods." Some of them even accepted the popular mythology but were careful to interpret it in a way of their own. Both the Cynics and the Stoics used mythology as symbolical of higher truth. This fact that the philosophies acknowledged "the gods" makes it difficult to say when anyone of them is speaking philosophically of the Deity, or popularly of "the gods" of polytheism.

Still, a Supreme Being, as Active Reason, is conceived of as underlying all and guiding all. Epictetus in one passage speaks of three greatnesses in one breath: God the Father, men, and the gods. "God is the Father of men as well as of gods."[26] Here God is the origin of both gods and men. In whatever way he meant it, it seems clear that Epictetus, on the one hand, acknowledged a plurality of gods and, on the other, that he acknowledged a God towering so far above "the gods" that he calls him "father of gods." He may simply have copied the popular conception that Zeus was the "father of the gods."

Epictetus, otherwise, speaks almost informally, in language of the most fervent theism. To his intensely religious nature God is everpresent, personal, "Father," "Creator," "Ruler," "Guardian." He sees our every deed, knows our every thought, and holds us responsible to him for our character and conduct. He is omnipresent. "So that, when you have shut the doors and made darkness within, you must never say you are alone; for you are not, but God is within, and your Daemon is within, and what need have they of light to see what you are doing?"[27]

Marcus Aurelius, on the other hand, is for the most part a pantheist. Yet, his pantheism is based less upon the hylozoism of the earlier Stoics than on the rationality of the All, intellectually conceived. His pantheism is spiritualistic or idealistic rather than physical or materialistic. He says: "You exist, but as a part inherent in a greater whole. You will vanish into that which gave you being; or rather you will be retransmuted into the Seminal and universal reason."[28]

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[26] Epictetus i. 3. 1.

[27] Epictetus Diss. i. 14.

As to the existence of "gods," or God, the philosophies generally accepted it. Dion Chrysostom pours scorn upon hedonistic atheism. "Our conception of God is innate, original, universal among all the races of men."[29] The belief in god depends in the first instance on no human teaching, any more than does the love of child to parent. Like all the deepest thinkers of his time, Dion is persuaded of the certainty of God's existence, but he is equally conscious of the remoteness of the Infinite Spirit and of the weakness of all human effort to approach, or to picture it to the mind of man. We men are to Dion like "children, crying in the night, and with no language but a cry."[30]

The existence of God, although maintained to be so obvious as to require no proof, was nevertheless proved in various ways. Inductively they reasoned from human nature, from history, and from the world; deductively from the a priori conception of God, and the logic of necessity.

According to Marcus Aurelius God is described as: The beginning of all things, the unifier of the creation. God is ethereal fire, he is ether and air. He is diffused throughout creation, he pervades all things. God is nature, God is soul, God is mind. He is the Word, He is the Reason, He is fate, He is the Providence, He is the determining cause of all things, He is Zeus.[31] In other writers of the time God is defined as a Living Presence, the Creative Intelligence, the Impersonal Force, the Personality, the Supreme Being. He is the all-pervading essence. He dwells within man and man is part of him and returns to him after the dissolution of the body.

> You are a being of primary importance. You are a fragment of God. You have within you part of him. Why, then, are you ignorant of your own kinship? Why do you not know the source from which you have sprung.[32]

Epictetus further defines man as the "child of God," a "Friend of

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[28] Aurelius Med. iv. 14.

[29] Samuel Dill, op. cit., p. 381; cf. Sen Ep. 117. 6.

[30] D. Chrys Or. xii. 42, 43.

[31] Henry Dwight Sedgwick, Marcus Aurelius (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), passim.

[32] Epictetus ii. 8. 11.

God," et cetera. Being thus descended from God, and being part of God, man ought to reverence God, worship and serve Him all the days of his life. The bad man is the "Godless man," the man who has renounced his origin and his benefactors.

The Cynics were probably the purest monotheists that classical antiquity produced. From the days of Antisthenes they had poured contempt on the popular religion and the worship of material images of the Divine. Demonax, the philosopher, was never seen to sacrifice to the gods and declined initiation at Eleusis. Dion Chrysostom taught that any sensible image of the Supreme, which does not carry the soul beyond the bounds of sense, defeats its purpose and is degrading to pure religion. Pictured or sculptured forms are only aids to that mystic imagination, through which we alone can see God.

The philosophies had no public worship of their own. They did not organize as a church or brotherhood. They had no sacraments and no initiation. It may even be questioned if they had any object of worship. Dill says: "The true Stoic has no real object of worship."[33] To know God is to worship Him. The beginning of the worship of the gods is to believe gods are. "He has worshipped the gods enough who has imitated them."[34] God is good and wishes only the good for his creatures. To seek to appease his wrath and avert his judgments becomes impiety.

There are few things finer in the Greek language than Cleanthes' "Hymn to Zeus," or than many of the impassioned prayers of Epictetus. The purpose of prayer with the Stoics was a noble one. It is not so much to obtain some object of desire, as to be freed from desiring objects.

> The gods either have power, or they have not. If they have, why pray at all? If they have, why not pray for the deliverance from the fear, or the desire, or the pain, which the thing causes, rather than for the withholding or the giving of the particular thing? Instead of praying, "Spare my little one" pray that your fears may be at rest.[35]

Reference has just been made to Cleanthes' "Hymn to Zeus." It has the merit of being the perfection of Stoic prayers, and it also gives us a concise summary of the Stoic theology, as formulated in the days of Cleanthes. It is intellectual and pantheistic, but it is permeated with emotional fervor. Prayer is meditation upon the nature of the universe, or at the most an expression of a desire to attain virtue. True worship lay in leading a life of reason in conformity with the rational constitution of the world. Prayer is communion with the Highest, an act of thanksgiving for blessings already received, an inspiration for a fuller and nobler life. "Why, if we had sense," says Epictetus, "ought we to be doing anything else, publicly and privately, than hymning and praising the Deity and rehearsing his benefits . . . . What else can I, a lame, old man, do, but sing hymns to God? If indeed, I were a nightingale, I should be singing as a nightingale; if a swan; as a swan. But as it is, I am a rational being, therefore, I must be singing hymns of praise to God."[36]

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[33] Samuel Dill, Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius, op. cit., p. 391.

[34] T. R. Glover, Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire, p. 57.

[35] Aurelius Med. ix. 40.

The God of the philosophies has many personal qualities, in spite of the fact that one can never be sure if he is personal or impersonal, if he has a father's heart or is a blind force. He is the maker and the guardian of man. He provides for the needs of man and for all created beings. He is omniscient, and man's purposes, and thoughts, and actions cannot be concealed from him. Nature's uniformity speaks of God's wisdom and goodness, and of Divine Reason. Life and death are in his hands. God cares for the whole as well as for the parts, for small things as well as great.

"Why," asks Seneca, "is it that God afflicts the best men with ill health, or sorrow, or some other misfortune?" It is for the same reason that in the army the bravest men are assigned to the most hazardous tasks. God hardens, reviews, and disciplines those whom he approves. God does not make a spoiled pet of a good man. He tests him, hardens him, and fashions him for his own service. Suffering and pain are by no means an unmixed evil. They come to those who are able to bear them, loaded with present or future blessings.

Men's duty to God may be summed up in the formula: "To reverence God, imitate him, and obey him." "As to piety towards the gods," says Epictetus, "you must know that this is the chief thing, to have right opinions about them, to think that they exist, and that they administer the all, well and justly, to obey them and to yield to them in everything that happens, and voluntarily to follow it as being accomplished by the wisest intelligence. If you do this you will never blame the gods, nor will you ever accuse them of neglecting you."[37]

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[36] Epictetus i. 16, 20.

Epictetus undoubtedly comes nearest to the Christian idea of God. We are to look to God in everything, both small and great, give thanks to God for fruit, for wine, and olive oil, et cetera.[38] Set our desire upon becoming pure in the presence of our pure self and of God. Make it our wish to appear beautiful in the sight of God.[39] "We ought to become of one mind with God. For I regard God's will as better than my will."[40] "I have submitted my freedom of choice unto God. He wills that I shall have fever; it is my will, too . . . . He will that I should get something, it is my wish, too. He does not will it; I do not wish it."[41]

The philosophical missionary did not claim any special revelation. He believed himself to be part of God and related to God. It was for man to realize this intimate relationship, and then seek to know God as best he could. God had laid down his law in nature and in the heart of man. To live in harmony with nature was to live in harmony with God. What was to the best interest of man always happened. It was the will of God for him and must be submitted to without murmur or complaint. "Reverence the gods and help men," was for him the summary of the good life.

The philosophical preachers were at their best in their moral teachings. They were iconoclastic in their denunciation of religious and other superstitions, and of immorality. They were weakest in their soteriology. They had no Savior to take away the impurity and the burdens of sin. They had no cathartic baptism to offer and no magic-working sacraments. Their idea of God was at its best vague and unsatisfactory. It was an improvement upon the God-idea of the Mysteries, but it stopped far short of that of Judaism and Christianity. For this the philosophical missionary cannot be blamed. He was true to his conviction and the light he had received.

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[37] Epictetus Encheiridion. 31.

[38] Epictetus ii. 19. 29; ii. 23. 5.

[39] Ibid. ii. 18, 19.

[40] Ibid. Fragments 4; iv. 7. 20.

[41] Ibid. iv. 1, 89.

The philosophical missionaries were the precursors of the Christian missionary, and they did much of the spade work which otherwise would have fallen to the Christian missionary.

Missionary Methods of the Philosophical Group

(1) Re-adaptation of the Message. The philosophical groups started out not as religions, but as philosophies. As time went on some groups, or a few in the group, caught a vision of greater usefulness. They saw on the one hand their own limited sphere of service if they remained as they were, and on the other hand the great religious need of humanity at large. Philosophy alone could never satisfy the masses. It could only lead men to touch the outer fringes of reality. Religion could lead men to reality itself.

The deeper down into knowledge the philosophers penetrated, in their effort to solve the riddle of life and the marvels of the universe, the more bewildered they became. Try as they would, their philosophical mode and way of thinking did not help them. They came now and then to passes where they saw written in large letters, "No thoroughfare." In other words, in their philosophical thinking they met God. What was he like? What was his attitude to men, friendly or unfriendly? Was there a plurality of gods or only one? How could men gain his good will? Such questions and many others the philosophers could answer only partially, or not at all. Fired by a new enthusiasm, they began to rewrite their philosophies. Where God had been formerly almost entirely crowded out, he was given a new and an important place. In trying to describe "God," either in singular or plural, their heart became burning within them with a passion to help and instruct suffering humanity, still groping in darkness. The philosophers were no longer satisfied with teaching the few only and the privileged ones. They wanted to reach the masses. They were confident that they now had a message, which the masses could understand, and which they needed.

The philosophy itself experienced a re-birth. This happened to Stoicism and Cynicism and Neo-Pythagoreanism, et cetera. The Athenians were satisfied with a metaphysical creed and academic disputations. The Romans, on the other hand, were a highly practical people. They listened to and accepted only what suited their habitual needs. What they demanded of a philosophy or a religion was that it should help them in daily living, that it should lighten their burdens and give them a new outlook on life. They were not so much interested in philosophy for its own sake, as they were in what practical value they could get out of it. The Roman nature never took very kindly to anything under the name of philosophy.[42] It was an age longing for a religion which would satisfy the deeper emotions, a religion which should offer divine help to human need and misery, divine guidance amid the gloom of time. It was an age that wanted to know the mystery of life and the mystery of death.

The life in Imperial Rome was not the same as in ancient Athens. The people were different, and the times were different. There was a time when people clamored for philosophy. That time was past. Now they wanted to know the deeper realities of life. They wanted religion; they wanted communion with God. They wanted something for their soul, that would sooth and give them peace. New religions were coming in all the time from the Orient, offering salvation and immortality and a good life here and beyond. Still there were some to whom the mystery religions did not appeal. They found greater satisfaction in Judaism or in Christianity. There was still another group that wanted both philosophy and religion. It was this important group, the intellectually religious, that prompted the Stoics, and the Cynics, et cetera, to reformulate their philosophy and make it a workable religious creed. It came to the Romans not as a cold and barren philosophy, but as a philosophical religion, with warmth and fervor.

What was it, that caused such a reformation within the philosophies themselves? It was a deeper understanding of philosophy and of human life that brought this new influx of missionary impulse which found an outlet in missionary activities and missionary zeal. New wine had been poured into philosophical wine-skins. New forms and new methods had to be found. Argumentations and disputations in the old lecture halls were not entirely dispensed with. Scholars were still being taught there, but both students and philosophers had now caught a new vision of humanity and of their responsibility to it. They left their lecture halls and their places of study and went out among the people, haranguing them on the streets or in the market places. The philosopher had become a preacher and the philosophy a religion.

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[42] Samuel Dill, Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius (London: Macmillan and Company, 1925), p. 352.

We cannot but admire the daring and the foresight of these philosophers who made these adjustments which they felt were necessary to greater usefulness in the service of mankind. Morality and philosophy were still expounded, but religion was no longer neglected. It took its place side by side with morality and philosophy in the worthy attempt to lift humanity to a higher level, intellectually, morally, and religiously.

(2) The teaching and the training of the few. Formulation of the message was the first and all-important step for the philosophies. This formulation was in its inception in a broad outline only. They started out with the conviction that they had a message to the teeming multitudes. Without this inward assurance, there would have been no missionary activities. The working out in detail and the adaptation to different audiences and classes of people took place in actual missionary activities. The presentation of their message and their missionary methods varied according as the needs presented themselves.

The reformulation of their message had a vital bearing on every type of work. It was nothing less than a new content put into philosophic forms. Teaching and lecturing continued as usual. Students flocked to the schools, and the philosophers continued their discussions. But there was a new enthusiasm, born out of a new vision and a new mission to regenerate and to serve a needy humanity. Not only had the message a new ring, but the teaching aim was a new one. Their schools had become training schools for future participators in the missionary movement of the philosophies.

The philosophic lecturer, say of the Stoic type, in the Roman Empire had an important task to do. His task fell broadly in three categories. He was to teach philosophy of his particular brand, and to acquaint his students with the teachings of other philosophies. He was engaged in character training, supposed to issue in moral and virtuous living, and he was to instill into his students an ardent zeal to benefit their fellowmen, by teaching and preaching a philosophy that would help them to know the right and to practice it in daily living, to know their duties to the spiritual powers, to themselves, and to their fellowmen, and follow them out in practice. Of these tasks the first may have been the easiest one. It was the first one imposed upon the philosopher-lecturer and had been going on uninterruptedly for about half a millennium. It was an intellectual task and did not impose any serious hardship on either the lecturer or his students.

But the philosopher, lecturing to his classes, was also engaged in character training of his students. This was a much harder task, since it put a moral restraint upon lecturer and students alike. Character training cannot be acquired from books. The theoretical knowledge may, but not the actual training. That has to be done in the stress and strain of life, through actual living. The character training became increasingly important, when the philosophies started out upon a missionary career in competition with other groups or religions. When all is said about the different missionary methods, the missionary himself still remains the most important element. It is he who comes in direct contact with the people. He is the representative and the pattern of the new religion. What kind of man is he? If he is friendly, and kind, and helpful, and humble, he may get a hearing. But if he is proud and overbearing and condescending, his religion is judged accordingly. The Cynics were known for their harshness, even rudeness. By this they antagonized many. Moreover, according to the testimony of Seneca, Musonius, Plutarch, and Epictetus, the philosophic preacher was tempted to win a vulgar applause, by vulgar rhetorical arts.[43] He became an entertainer instead of a preacher of righteousness.

Many examples might be cited of preacher-philosophers, as well as teachers who owed their great names and their success to their harmonious, beautiful characters. Euphrates, the Syrian Stoic, a friend of Pliny, was stately and handsome, with a demeanor which excited reverence, without overawing the hearer. He was irreproachable in his own life, he condemned sin, but was merciful to the sinner.[44] Apollonius, the healer, the mystic, the revivalist; Musonius, the physician of souls; Epictetus, the searching preacher and kind-hearted man; Dion Chrysostom, the apostle of Greek culture and social righteousness, all made the impress upon the world they did mostly on account of what they were. They were great teachers, preachers, and healers, but that would only have given them a temporary name and following.

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[43] Epictetus ii. 19; iii. 23; Plutarch De Recta Rat. Aud. vii. viii.

[44] Plin. Ep. 1. 10.

Demonax, the Cynic philosopher, is probably the classical example. He had a strange personal charm and attained to an extraordinary popularity and reverence. He lived to nearly a hundred years. He is said never to have had an enemy. He was the object of universal deference whenever he appeared in public. The children brought him their little presents of fruit and called him father. A Chinese friend once told us, speaking of a certain preacher: "If we do like the man, we like his religion too."

There is, of course, a great deal of truth in this saying. And it goes to show how important character training was in ancient time and is in modern. The philosophies did well in emphasizing this aspect in their student training. But of course even this important truth may be overstated. The great mass of philosophic preachers had to face a great deal of obloquy and vulgar contempt. Their message of self-renunciation was an irritating challenge to a pleasure-loving and worldly age. They would hardly be pleased to hear that their civilization was an empty show, without a solid core of character, that their hopes of happiness from a round of games and festivals, from the splendor of art in temples and statues were the merest mirage. The philosophers came in for a good deal of actual persecution: Socrates was condemned to die, so was Seneca. Musonius was exiled, and so was Epictetus. All philosophers were exiled from Rome by Domitian. It took a good deal of courage to be a preacher those days. Weaklings would not do. Men of conviction, of courage, perseverance and character were needed. Without a missionary impulse there can be no missionary activities. It was in the schools that missionary workers were trained, even as it is today.

The teaching activities of the philosophies had as aim to indoctrinate the students, inspire them for their work, and to send them out into the world as teachers of God and of morality. The aim of their missionary activities was to save men's souls from the shipwreck of character, caused by pride, love of the world, excess of luxury, and a wrong conception of Deity. They were to teach men to examine themselves, to repent from their evil ways, and to love and follow the truth. They were, in short, to call men to a higher standard of life.

(3) The preaching to the masses. No religion ever succeeds which ignores the common people, the masses. It seems to be harder for a religious faith to penetrate downwards, i. e., from the upper strata of society down to the lower, than it is for it to penetrate upwards. Christianity began among the poor and downtrodden and penetrated upwards to the throne of Rome. Or to take a modern illustration, Christianity made a beginning with the upper classes in Japan, but it had to make a new beginning among the masses before it registered any real success. In China, on the other hand, Christianity started at the bottom and worked upwards, until it reached the very head of the government.

When the philosophies became religions the philosophers turned to preaching. The best teacher is often the best preacher, and many a philosopher turned out to be a powerful preacher. Not all the philosophical preachers can be considered good. Some of them were too eager to get out among the people. They left their training course too soon, or did not attend one at all. This was especially the case with the Cynics. Many of these were lay-preachers, unlettered and rude in actions and appearance. These were a common occurrence in the Roman Empire, with long cloak, and staff, and scrip, haranguing in the squares or lanes to unlettered crowds. Their subjects varied with the audiences. But they came back almost to weariness, on the same eternal principles, of true gain and loss, the illusions of passions, of freedom through renunciation, et cetera.

Epictetus, a Stoic himself, having observed that there were various types of Cynic preachers, speaks of the true Cynic as a messenger from Zeus, to tell men that they have wandered far from the right way, that they are seeking happiness in regions where happiness is not to be found. The preaching was also to be a preaching by example. The Cynic with a true vocation could point to himself, without home, or wife, or children, without a city, without possessions, having forsaken all for moral freedom. "The Cynic is the father of all men; the men are his sons, the women his daughters." For their sake he became a wandering mendicant. He is the "spy and herald of God."

Apollonius was a physician of souls. He looked upon men as his patients, needing his help, physically and spiritually.

And so he went about, preaching, teaching, and healing. Epictetus, like Apollonius, aimed at conversion. He spoke to the conscience of men so that each hearer felt as if his own faults were set before his eyes. Maximus of Tyre, a powerful preacher, had for his object to bring man in communion with God, and to teach him his duty to his fellowmen and to himself. His discourses approach nearest to our conception of a sermon.

A typical philosopher-preacher is Dion Chrysostom (50-117 A. D.) He does not seem to have attached himself to any special school, but he belonged to the same missionary movement which had gripped so many philosophers during the early Roman Empire. He sprang from a good family at Prusa, in Bithynia. He was trained in all the arts of rhetoric and taught and practiced them in the early part of his life. He was exiled by the Emperor Domitian and wandered over many lands, supporting himself often by menial service. During his exile he was converted to a more serious view of life. He went around in a beggar's dress, but wherever he went people recognized him as a philosopher, and he was surrounded by crowds of people, eager to hear any word of counsel or comfort in the doubts and troubles of their lives. They plied him with questions on the great problem, "How to live"; and Chrysostom was compelled to find an answer for them and for himself. It can hardly be said that it was of his own choice he became a preacher. Circumstances and the people pressed him into service. And when he had once entered into that service, he was not allowed to beat a retreat. In his discourses, he never quite shook off the tone and the traditions of the rhetorical school. He always had the ambition of saying things in the most elegant and attractive style. Philosophy to him was really a religion, the science of right living, in conformity to the will of the Heavenly Power. He aimed at making men better, happier, moral, and virtuous.

He pointed out to his audiences that civilization alone will not save them. Splendid civilizations of the past had perished, because they had lost their soul, like Assyria, Lydia, the great cities of Magna Graecia, and Macedon. It needed both courage and conviction to preach such unpalatable truths to an age which gloried in its material splendor. He preached the duty of forgiveness and of mutual love. He attacked the system of slavery and of prostitution. As a court preacher to emperor Trajan, he was no mere flatterer. He held that a king is appointed by God for the good of his subjects, and ought to be a father for his people.

The philosophical missionary was very much thrown upon his own resources and his own initiative. He had received no divine command, and he could not fall back upon the powerful phrase, "Thus says the Lord." In isolated instances, we hear of a philosophical preacher referring to himself as "God's ambassador." But most of these preachers had only a vague idea of God. They were not sure if there was a plurality of gods or only one. Some there were who preached monotheism, although not always consistently. Some spoke in favor of polytheism. Some believed in a future life and immortality, others were satisfied that death ended all. These preachers had, indeed, very little to offer to suffering humanity. They had no heavenly city or pearly gates to arouse interest, no hope to offer of future reward in a life to come. Be virtuous for virtue's sake, refrain from doing evil and you will lead a happy life. Bear suffering patiently. Steel yourself against it. This is the best way to meet it. Suffering is unavoidable, and it is not altogether evil.

Philosophy stood high in the scales of values at that time. The philosophers were looked up to and supposed to know all the secrets a human being could possibly know. But in spite of this high regard, it required all their "sweet reasonableness" and ingenuity to win men to righteousness by persuasive speech. If they themselves practiced what they preached, and were men of character and pure motives, they could expect to score some successes and gain a following, but if not, they were sure to score contempt and ridicule.

Practically the only motive and driving power in all their missionary activities was the love of truth and the love of men. If there were other motives, they are not easily discerned. For a time this motive was strong enough to send them out among men, preaching morality and the gospel of the good life.

CHAPTER VI

JUDAISM

Missionary Motives in the Old Testament and Their Gradual Development

The religion of the Old Testament was not always a missionary religion. The Mosaic religion was tribal or national to the core. The God of Sinai became the God of Israel exclusively, and Israel only was His people. The Mosaic picture of God was the prince of a tribe or a people. Israel stood in covenant-relationship to God. Yahweh did not stand in such relation to any other nation or people. Other nations had their national gods which were tolerated within their own dominions. Israel only asked that Yahweh unequivocally should be recognized as the supreme God and King over Israel.

At the time of the early kings two significant religious ideas emerged which ought, it seems, to have stimulated to proselyte-propaganda. These ideas were: the thought of Yahweh as the creator of the universe, and the thought of mankind as having an inner relationship and organic unity. If Yahweh was the creator of the world, and if he had created all men of the same blood, then it would seem logical that he should be recognized and confessed as Lord in the world which belonged to him. If the world had come into being by a creative act of Yahweh, then no other gods could possibly have any claims to worship beside him. This conclusion, however logical it may seem, was never drawn.

Creation for the Yahwist was only the first step in the sacred history by which Yahweh chose Israel to be his own people. Creation came also to be considered as evidence of the Creator's glory, greatness, and wisdom. This creative act of God achieved religious importance for Israel by deepening and strengthening its relationship to Him. It never led to any active proselyte propaganda.

The unity of the human race, being created by the same

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God, served in ancient times, as background for Israel's election. The purpose of the creation story in Genesis was to show how Israel, step by step, separated itself from the rest of mankind and came to occupy the place of Yahweh's chosen people. In the so-called "Patriarchal Blessing" we have a vague suggestion of Israel's future significance for the Gentile world. But the idea of Israel going out in the world, converting the nations to a belief in Yahweh, this thought remained entirely foreign to Israel during the period of the Kings. Something had to happen in Israel before it was willing to leave the position of isolation and become a missionary to the nations. What was it? How did it come about? It was a gradual development.

(A) Israel arrived at an universal idea of God. Yahweh came to be conceived of as the only God, and the only Lord over the whole human race;

(B) Israel woke up to the fact that it had in its law and religion a unique and inestimable value which the other nations of the world were lacking;

(C) Israel came to know the Gentile world, during the Exile, as it had never known it before. They learned of the degradation and the hopeless position of the Gentiles, but also of their capacity for repentance and regeneration;

(D) Israel became convinced that it was called by Yahweh to be his messengers among the nations. God had placed his people in the midst of the Gentiles for a purpose.

Let us examine these missionary motives a little closer:

(1) The Monotheistic-universal conception of God. The Hebrews had to travel a long and tortuous road before they arrived at a place where they saw, that the Creator of the universe was also the ruler of the world and the God of every human being.

In the earliest time of Israel as a nation, Yahweh was the God of Israel only, and his dominion was confined exclusively to Canaan. David was still of the opinion that to be exiled from the land of Israel of necessity meant that he would have to serve other gods. "For they have driven me out this day from the abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, 'Go serve other gods.'"[1] When Naaman wanted to worship Yahweh in his homeland, Syria, he asked for "two mules' burden of earth" in order to be able to worship Yahweh in Damascus upon his own soil.[2] Jephthah, a judge in Israel, knew that Chemosh had given to the Ammonites the land they possessed, just as Yahweh had given to the Hebrews the land they possessed.[3] In ancient times in Israel, the tendency was toward monolatry with tolerance of other religions, but with complete isolation from them. Balaam sees in Israel a people that "dwell alone."[4] It took Israel a long time before it became fully cognizant of the fact that Yahweh was the God and the Ruler over the whole world and over all people.

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[1] I Sam. 26:19. [2] II Kings 5:17.

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It was chiefly the great prophets in Israel that opened the eyes of the people and enlarged their horizon. For Amos, Yahweh is already the God of the whole world, the great Governor over every people. "Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor? and the Syrians from Kir?"[5]

Yahweh is the ethical God and rules according to ethical laws. He punishes the nations for their crimes, even crimes against one another, entirely separate from their attitude to Israel.[6] From this starting point the development continues. Yahweh becomes "a God afar off."[7]

Deutero-Isaiah, the great prophet of the Exile, has rightly been styled "the first conscious monotheist in Israel."[8] For him gods, in plural, do not exist in other form than idols of wood and metal. Yahweh is the only God. There exists no other besides Him, worthy the name. In the Sibylline books, which are partly Jewish propaganda-literature, it is stated: "There is only one single God, who alone is the Ruler of the world. Him you shall worship. He is the only existing Ruler of the world . . . . Flee away from the unrighteous idol worship. Worship the Living God."[9]

Theoretical monotheism, in abstract form, hardly sufficed as a missionary motive. It became productive first after it had been supplemented by the thought that Yahweh stood in a positive relation to the nations of the world. He had claims upon them, and they had certain obligations to him. Yahweh had it in his power to do with the Gentiles as he pleased. He could use them as his tools, to accomplish his will, and he had a right to demand their worship and service. In the eschatological passages of the prophet-literature, the thought is often expressed that the nations of the world would come to Zion and worship the God of Israel.

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[3] Judges 11:24. [4] Num. 23:9. [5] Amos 2:1.

[6] Amos 2:1. [7] Jer. 23:23.

[8] Joh. Lindblom, "Gammaltestamentliga Missionsmotiv," Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1937), p. 205.

[9] Sibyl. Or. iii. 763.

> Many people shall go and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of God from Jerusalem."[10]

In another prophecy of Isaiah, we are told that Assyrians and Egyptians are to turn to the Lord and become associated with Israel as the people of the Lord.[11] In the so-called "Apocalype of Isaiah" it is said, that Yahweh is to make a feast for all people, and that he will destroy the covering cast over all people.[12]

> At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all the nations shall be gathered into it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart.[13]

The Gentiles are to confess their sins and come from the ends of the earth and say: "Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit."[14] "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord."[15]

These passages, which we have quoted, do not speak of any proselyte-propaganda. There is no direct exhortation to Israel to do propaganda work and convert the nations. The expectation seems to have been that the Gentiles would come of their own accord in seeing all the wonders which the Lord performed in behalf of his people Israel.

That Yahweh is also the God of the Gentiles finds expression in Deutero-Isaiah. "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear."[16]

It would, indeed, be difficult to find any passage in the Old Testament, where it is said that Yahweh "loves" the Gentiles.

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[10] Isa. 2:3. [11] Isa. 19:22-25. [12] Isa. 25:6-8.

[13] Jer. 3:17.

[14] Jer. 16:19; Cf. Zeph. 2:11; Hab. 2:14; Hag. 2:8; Zec. 2:11; 8:22 f; 14:9, 16.

[15] Ps. 22:27. [16] Isa. 45:23.

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Love in the Old Testament is the love of God for his chosen people. When a particular passage in the Old Testament speaks of God as "loving the stranger,"[17] it refers to Yahweh's care for the guest or alien, in giving him food and raiment. This alien had for some time lived among the Israelites and participated with them in their cult.

Dr. Kaufman Kohler, the eminent Rabbi, has this to say in regard to the "stranger":

> The fact is, however, that the word "stranger" is a mistranslation of the Hebrew Ger, which denotes a guest or an alien under the protection of the law of the land. This protection was afforded to him, in Semitic circles, as soon as he had entered the tent of the Sheik of the clan, and in Aryan circles, as he approached some family hearth, which brought him into relation with the tutelary deity of the clan; but at the same time he also assumed a certain obligation toward that deity. Accordingly, the Jewish Ger was enjoined to observe certain laws in common with the Israelites. Thus he was especially bound not to violate the Sabbath by doing work on that day, nor to provoke God's anger by idolatrous practice or blasphemy, and, according to the Priest's Code, to avoid eating blood and contracting incestuous marriages. These are the conditions of his admission into the category of a political Ger, or protected alien. In order to become a full citizen, however, he had to undergo the rite of circumcision. With the transformation of the Israelitish state into a religious community after the Exile, the Ger became a Proselyte, that is one who has come over, in abandoning his heathen belief, and, according as he accepted certain parts of the Mosaic law or the entire law, he was regarded either as a mere Ger Toshab, a sojourner, or a full-fledged member of the Jewish community, called Ger Zedek, a proselyte of righteousness, that is, an adopted citizen of the city of Righteousness, as Jerusalem was called. The real meaning is "One who has come under the protection of the holy city," in the same sense as the Rabbis term it, "One who has come under the wings of Shekinah."[18]

The reason why God spared Nineveh was "pity" (chus), which was also extended to the cattle.[19] In one exceptional passage, Jeremiah speaks of the compassion (richam) of Yahweh towards the evil neighbors of Israel that "touch the inheritance which I caused my people Israel to inherit."[20] Compassion here is quite different in fervor from the "love" Yahweh has for his chosen people. It really amounts to this, that Yahweh, after having punished them and "plucked them up from off their land," will have pity on them and let them return to their native soil.

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[17] Deut. 10:18.

[18] Kaufmann Kohler, The Origin of the Synagogue and the Church (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929), pp. 158, 159.

[19] Jonah 4:10-11. [20] Jer. 12:15.

(2) Israel's consciousness of the unique value of its own religion. Quite early the Israelites began to reflect upon the precious inheritance they had in their religion and in their law. The J. document in Genesis was aware that the descendants of Abraham were in possession of a treasure which other nations had a desire to obtain. Isaiah exclaims: "For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, not perceived by the ear, neither has the eye seen a God who acts toward His people as Jehovah does toward His people."[21] Israel's God alone has power to foretell what is going to happen and bring it to completion.[22] For Jews in late Inter-Testamental times, it had become a dogma that Israel alone was in possession of the true religion. All the others were lies and deceptions. Israel alone among the nations did not worship idols made with hands. As Israel became conscious of being a Torah-religion, Torah came to be considered as their greatest divine gift, and Torah became a special object of praise. Israel is admonished to keep the Torah,

> for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great who has God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is? And what nation is there so great that has statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law?"[23]

Deutero-Isaiah uses only logical reasoning when it says: "The isles shall wait for His law."[24]

Israel was in possession of "wisdom" personified. Wisdom and Torah became later identified. In this sublime idea, that Torah contained the quintessence of all wisdom, lay imbedded a very strong missionary motive. The wisdom-teacher, conscious of this fact, lets the wisdom itself speak: "Come to me, you who are desirous of me, and be satisfied with my gifts. To think of me is sweeter than honey and to possess me is better than purest honey."[25]

Jerusalem and Zion were for the Jews a precious possession. Jerusalem was to them the "City of the Lord of Hosts," and Zion was "the joy of the whole earth."[26] "All nations shall flow unto it," eager to receive instruction in the ways of the Lord.[27] Jerusalem and Zion are to be the center of the world, during the Messianic Kingdom.

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[21] Isa. 64:4. [22] Isa. 41:21; 43:9; 44:7.

[23] Deut. 4:6-8. [24] Isa. 42:4. [25] Sir. 24:9.

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(3) Israel's knowledge of the actual condition of the Gentile world. In spite of a lofty monotheism and a consciousness of the supremacy of their own religion over all others, no proselyte-propaganda was initiated until Israel was removed from its own land and forced to reside in a Gentile and alien land. It was during this period that the Hebrews came to know the Gentiles, the ins and outs, as they had never known them before. The importance of the Babylonian Exile, for the religion of Israel, can hardly be overestimated, and its significance for the entire world is scarcely any less. There the Hebrews learned to know paganism in all its concreteness from the inside. The first discovery they made was the hollowness and destitution of polytheism and idolatry. A new literature, the so-called idol-persiflage, came into vogue, in which idolatry is treated with satire and irony. Deutero-Isaiah is here the trail-blazer. He describes how the carpenter selects a piece of wood and makes his plans and his drawings.

> He burneth part thereof in fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; yea, he warmeth himself and saith, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire;" and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image; he falleth down unto it and worshippeth, and prayeth unto it, and saith, "Deliver me; for thou art my God."[28]

In the Apocryphal Daniel, the dragon is made to break in two by Daniel. At another time, Daniel outwitted the priests of Bel by proving that it was they, and not the god, who devoured the victuals sacrificed to the idol.

It was not only idolatry that came in for sarcasm. The moral depravation in the Gentile world got its share, too. Ecclesiasticus describes the depravity in the Gentile world in such a way that one is reminded of Paul's description in Romans.[29] But through intercourse with the Gentile world, they also came to know that repentance from sin and conversion to the true God was possible for the Gentiles. In spite of the degradation and the low estate of the Gentile world, it had not been possible completely to efface the image of God in man. The capacity of turning to God and of repentance was still with him. This afforded a point of contact with the Gentiles in the effort to convert them to Yahweh. The eschatological hope in Israel affords another evidence of the growing faith, relative to the possibility of the conversion of Gentiles.

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[26] Ps. 48:2, 8.

[27] Isa. 2:2, 3.

[28] Isa. 44:12-17.

[29] Eccl. 14; Rom. 1:18-32.

Isaiah was not expressing a romantic idea only when he wrote: "The isles shall wait for me, and on my arm shall they trust."[30] Deep down in the consciousness of the Gentile world there was a longing for a more satisfactory religion than they had. Deeply rooted in the subconsciousness of Israel was this idea that the Gentiles some day should turn to the Lord of Heaven. In the wisdom literature, the idea is expressed that wisdom was a common possession of the human race.

What was then to be demanded of Gentiles turning to the God of Israel? The Inter-Testamental writers hold forth the view that the very least that should be demanded from them was that they should keep the Noachian commandments.[31] It is very probable that Isaiah had the Noachian commandments in view when he wrote: "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant."[32] These commandments were given to mankind long before the covenant with Abraham and the law of Moses, and were looked upon as binding for the whole human race.

During the Exile, the Jews came into contact with the Persian monotheism of Ahura Mazda. Here was something similar to their own belief. This could not possibly fail to impress a race so impressionable and so intelligent as the Jewish. Cyrus is described not only as the instrument of releasing Israel from captivity, but as the representative of Yahweh himself, even as a worshipper of Yahweh. "He is my Shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure."[33] He is Yahweh's anointed, "whose right hand I have holden."[34] He is said to be loved by the Lord.[35] In the royal edict, releasing the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, he acknowledges that the Lord, God of Heaven, has given him all the kingdoms of the earth.[36]

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[30] Isa. 51:5. [31] Gen. 9:1-7. [32] Isa. 24:5.

[33] Isa. 44:28. [34] Isa. 45:1. [35] Isa. 48:14.

In the book of Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar and King Darius are both confessors of Yahweh, of his majesty and power. The Gentile sailors, in the book of Jonah, cried unto Yahweh, beseeching him.[37] The belief in the possibility of the conversion of the Gentiles found an affirmation in the great number of proselytes, both in Palestine and in the Diaspora, who joined with the Jews in worshipping Yahweh. The proselytes and the half-proselytes (the God-fearers) play an important part in the Old Testament, and in the Rabbinical writings they are often referred to. It is the increasing number of proselytes coming in that makes the prophet cry out in the name of the Lord: "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."[38] The great prophet of the Exile looks ahead to the time when "one shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord and surname himself by the name of Israel."[39]

The book of Jonah and the story of Ruth are told with the aim in view of imparting a more friendly and optimistic view in regard to the Gentiles. Jonah is sent to the capital of Israel's archenemy, the Assyrians, and to the representatives of the grossest idolatry. He is sent to Nineveh not on a missionary errand, but as a preacher of impending judgment. But the result of this preaching was quite otherwise than Jonah had expected. The king with his people repented in sackcloth and ashes and cried "mightily unto God."[40] And Yahweh took pity on them and saved the city. There could no longer be any doubt. Gentiles of the worst type had already repented, and Yahweh had accepted their repentance and answered their prayer.

(4) Israel became conscious of a divine call to make Yahweh known in the world, to proclaim his name among the Gentiles. God himself, or God in history, had taught the Hebrews this lesson. It was during the Babylonian Exile that it became clear to them that their God must have had a purpose in permitting his chosen people to be exiled among the nations. Yahweh wanted them to be his messengers among the Gentiles. It was the great prophet of the Exile who this time, too, interpreted and formulated

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[36] Isa. 48:14.

[37] Jonah 1:14.

[38] Isa. 56:7.

[39] Isa. 44:5.

[40] Jonah 3:5-10.

Israel's obligation: "You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant, whom I have chosen."[41]

In another place, Isaiah formulates Israel's missionary calling in this way:

> For an everlasting covenant will I make with you, the covenant of love, which I faithfully promised to David. As once I made him a witness to peoples as leader and commander of peoples, so you shall call nations you know not. And nations that know you not shall run for you. For the sake of the Lord, your God, the Holy one of Israel.[42]

As David of old was called to be a witness to the nations of Yahweh and his power, so Israel as a nation is now called and chosen!

We cannot here discuss the problem of "the Servant of the Lord," in Deutero-Isaiah. Interpretations oscillate between an individual and the exiled Israel. Whichever interpretation we adopt, it is clear that the "Servant of the Lord" is to do active missionary service for the Lord among the nations. "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen, in whom My soul delighteth: I have put My Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles."[43] "It is too light a thing, that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."[44]

It was in the darkest hour of its national history that Israel became conscious of its divine calling to spread the knowledge of God and his Torah among the nations. Formerly they had believed that the conversion of the Gentiles would take place without any help of theirs, but now they saw clearly that they were called to coöperate with God and be his messengers in order to bring it about. The certainty of this calling constituted the great gain acquired by the Hebrews in the Exile. Their suffering and humiliation took on a new aspect, if God had a purpose with it all.

Passages in the Old Testament in regard to Israel's consciousness of their missionary obligation are not many. They appear chiefly in Deutero-Isaiah, and in the Psalms, and are of comparatively late date. In poetic language the Psalmist gives expression to his desire to proclaim the name of the Lord to the Gentiles. He exhorts others to make him known, and his words are a direct appeal to the Gentiles to repent and worship the true God.[45] The prophet of God looks forward to the day when Yahweh shall gather all nations and tongues to Jerusalem.

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[41] Isa. 43:10, 12; 44:8.

[42] Isa. 55:3-5 (The American Translation).

[43] Isa. 42:1. [44] Isa. 49:6.

> They shall come and see My glory, and through them will I set up a sign. Such of them as escape will I send to the nations, to Tarshish, Put, and Lydia, to Meshech and Rosh, to Tubal and Javan, the distant coasts and to the isles afar off, that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory, and they shall declare My glory among the nations.[46]

Evidently those who are to be sent to the nations are thought of as proselytes from the nations gathered at Jerusalem.

No one of these Old Testament missionary motives, which we have discussed, was strong enough by itself and alone to break down the wall of isolation and explode preconceived ideas. But in that very moment, when they all united their forces, the active proselyte-propaganda sprang up like a flame from the fuel. The "chosen people"[47] had been chosen for a special task, to be God's messengers to the nations, and they set out to accomplish it.

The Dispersion of the Jews and the Extent of Their Proselyte-Propaganda

While the religion of the Jewish people had its origin in most ancient times, the name Judaism comes from a rather late period. It appears first in II Maccabees,[48] a Greek work of the end of the second century B. C., and it bears the mark of having been coined in antithesis to the term Hellenism. The sharp contrast between Hellenism and Judaism became painfully evident to the Jews. We are told that "a man could neither keep the Sabbath, nor celebrate the feasts of the fathers, nor so much as confess himself to be a Jew."[49] The term Ἰουδαῖος may well have been coined originally by the Gentiles as a mark of contempt. But later the term lost every shade of reproach and became even a title of honor.[50] The term "*Jehudi*" at first denoted a member of the tribe of Judah, but subsequent to the fall of the Northern Kingdom, it came to designate a member of any Israelite tribe. According to the book of Esther, which was probably written in Maccabean times, Mordecai, the Benjamite, is spoken of as a "Jew."[51] Judaism thus came to denote the religion of the Jewish people, their beliefs, ideals, laws, and customs. This is eminently so during the period of Jewish history with which we are chiefly concerned.

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[45] Ps. 9:12; 18:50; 22:26 f.; 67; 72:11; 96:3,10.

[46] Isa. 66:18, 19.

[47] "In the designation, 'Am Segula,' the Chosen People, the accent is on 'people' not on 'chosen.' It is not the chosen people, but the chosen people. The negation that lies in the epithet 'chosen' is not directed against other peoples, but rather towards the priests. This designation signifies that the priests are excluded from every privilege and high position in regard to the rest of humanity. Israel differs from the rest of mankind only in this, that it first recognized and sought to realize in practical living its relationship to God. Israel, therefore, without further ceremonies accepted the calling to be the teacher of humanity with regard to the recognition of the Eternal Father of which every human being carries in his breast an image." J. Goldschmidt, Das Judentum in der Religious-geschichte der Menschheit (Frankfurt A. M.: J. Kauffman, 1907), p. 64. What Goldschmidt has to say in reference to the "Chosen People" is very ingenious, but hardly convincing.

It is not necessary here to go into detail as to the history of the "chosen people": their conquest of Canaan and making it their national home, their struggle against unfriendly tribes and neighbors and against an ever-present polytheism. Great men arose amongst the Jews, men who have written their names indelibly in the history of mankind: Moses, the lawgiver and the religious genius: David and Solomon, great kings, God-fearing and wise; prophets like Samuel, Elijah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, men who saw visions and who were able to interpret them, men and women who experienced God in such a way that they could proclaim "thus saith the Lord." Wise men, religious men, men with spiritual insight wrote their sacred literature, consisting of law, history, wisdom literature, prophecy and praise. No other nation has produced such a literature.

The Palestinian history of Israel is full of storm and stress. The conquest of the land as a home for the Israelites was a bitter one, and the religious conquest was even more intense. There was the old and popular religion with its strong appeal over against the religion of Yahweh. There was, at times, a draw between the political leaders of the nation and the great religious leaders, between the priests and the prophets, between those who preached reform and religious conquest and those who preferred status quo. There were strong divisive elements, too, within the nation, and finally at the demise of the great king Solomon, the United kingdom fell apart into two kingdoms. Instead of strengthening one another, the two kingdoms grew further and further apart, politically and religiously. In 722, the Northern Kingdom fell before the onslaught of Assyria, and its people were carried away as captives to Assyria. The Southern Kingdom, being less exposed than the Northern to the covetous designs of the then world-powers, and pursuing a wiser foreign policy and being religiously more united and stronger, survived as an independent nation for another one hundred thirty-six years. But being situated between the great world powers of Egypt and Babylonia, and undecided what way to turn, the kingdom of Judah fell in 586 B. C., and part of its people were sent into exile to Babylon.

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[48] II Macc. 2:21; 8:1; 14:38. [49] II Macc. 6:7.

[50] Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *St. Paul Epistle to the Galatians* (New York: Macmillan a[illegible]., 1890), *passim*.

[51] Esther 2:5 and other places.

Now begins a time of suffering and national humiliation. But the national spirit could not be crushed, and the religious spirit soared to heights unknown before. A great prophet, the "great unknown," arose in Babylon. For convenience's sake, he is labelled Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah; but in spite of that, he remains the "great unknown." It was he that solved the mystery and interpreted the riddle of Israel's suffering. It was all for a divine purpose. Israel was to be Yahweh's messenger and witness among the nations. This entailed deprivation, misunderstanding, and prolonged suffering. Israel was to be servant of Yahweh. In Babylon, it was revealed why Israel was the "chosen people," chosen to be a channel of blessing to other people. Chosen not to lord it over the nations, but to be the servant of the Lord to the nations. She was not to be the servant of other nations, but the servant of the Eternal God, the Most High.

This was the beginning of Diaspora, and it has not ended yet. True, the Babylonian Exile came to an end, and the exiles were allowed to return to their homeland again. But only a few availed themselves of this opportunity. The majority of the Jews have ever since been in exile, away from the land of their fathers. Even during the glorious restoration, under the Maccabean dynasty, the majority of their compatriots were outside the kingdom, in Babylonia, Persia, Syria, and Egypt. Their suffering has not come to an end yet and neither has their service. Their service to mankind has been little understood and never fully appreciated.

Their service was to be to the nations, and to the nations they had to go. Since Diaspora was to be the place of service, there seems to have come upon this homeless race an irresistible urge to go to every place where civilized man can go. How did it come about that the shores of the Mediterranean were simply littered with Jewish colonies? It was due to numerous causes, and those in part obscure. All we can hope to do is to point out the most outstanding ones, and to observe, where this is possible, how this Jewish migration, forced or voluntary, reacted upon the proselyte-propaganda in Judaism.

As far back as the prophet Jeremiah, there was formed a diaspora in Egypt.[52] After the destruction of Jerusalem, a great number of Jews migrated voluntarily into Egypt, under the leadership of Johanan ben Kareah, and they forced Jeremiah and Baruch to go with them.[53] These immigrants seem to have turned to idol worship at once, burning incense to and worshipping the gods of Egypt. When Jeremiah remonstrated with them in order to make them see their evil ways, they firmly avowed their decision "to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem."[54] Instead of doing propaganda among the Gentiles for the God of Israel, they turned to idol worship themselves.

During the Persian overlordship of Egypt, many Jewish soldiers were garrisoned at Elephantine, also called Jeb, near Assuan, or Syene. A number of papyrus inscriptions in Demotic, Aramaic, and Greek have been excavated. One of the documents is a marriage contract. Other documents deal with official correspondence with Bagoas at Jerusalem and with Sinuballit at Samaria, asking them for help. The Jews had been permitted to erect a Yahweh temple at Elephantine. The feeling between the Jewish colony and the Egyptians was tense; and then one day the Jewish temple was destroyed by Egyptian troops. The Jews at Elephantine carried on an active proselyte-propaganda. Some of the names from Elephantine are Egyptian names and may have been proselytes. There are over three hundred Jewish names on the papyrus. Some of these had fathers or grandfathers with Egyptian names. Nibtachja, a Jewish woman, married for the second time. This time with an Egyptian, Ashor, son of Zacho, a servant in the king's palace. He became a proselyte to Judaism, and they had a son whom they called Nathan. The last document is dated 400 B. C.[55] During the conquests of Alexander, many Jews were transplanted to Syria and Egypt. When Ptolemy I evacuated Syria, many of the Jews voluntarily followed him to his kingdom.[56] It is also related that Ptolemy took 30,000 Jews with him to Egypt in order to garrison the frontiers. The community of Jews in Alexandria originated with Ptolemy Soter, 319 B. C. He also compelled Jews to settle in Cyrenaica.[57] Antiochus the Great, in 200 B. C., transferred Jews from Mesopotamia to his newly founded colonies in Phrygia and Lydia.[58] During the Maccabean wars (166-79 B. C.) against neighboring kingdoms: Syria, Arabia, Egypt, many Jewish soldiers were made prisoners and sold into slavery to Egypt and Asia Minor.[59] The son of the high priest Onias betook himself to Egypt and there set up a rival temple to that at Jerusalem, at Leontopolis, by Heliopolis, in the Eastern part of the Delta, during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, 164 B. C. This temple had no connection with the earlier one at Elephantine. The temple at Jerusalem had fallen into the hands of usurpers, and this one was built in protest.[60] The first Jewish community established across the Tiber at Rome was composed of captives that Pompey had brought back from Jerusalem, 63 B. C. Isolated captive Jews may have found their way to Rome at a much earlier date.[61]

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[52] Jer. 24:8.

[53] Jer. 42, 43.

[54] Jer. 44:17.

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[55] Edward Meyer, Der Papyrusfund von Elephantine (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche [Buchhandlung], 1912), passim.

[56] Contra Apion 1.22; Josephus Ant. 12. 1.

[57] Jos. C. Apion. 2, 4, 44. [58] Jos. Ant. 12. 3, 4.

[59] Ch. Guignebert, Le Monde Juif vers le temps de Jesus (Paris: La Renaissance du livre, 1935), p. 275.

[60] Meyer, op. cit., p. 36.

[61] Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk and Wagnall's Co., 1903).

The most diverse witnesses, such as Strabo, Philo, Seneca, the author of Acts, and Josephus all bear testimony to the fact that the Jewish people were disseminated over the whole civilized world. Acts gives us a vivid picture of the extension of the Diaspora:

> Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven . . . . . Parthians and Medes and Elamites and dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judaea and Cappadocia in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome both Jews and proselytes.[62]

In the first century B. C. and to the first century A. D., the Jews were dispersed in every part of the Roman empire, around the Mediterranean and bordering the Euxine Sea, in Armenia, Syria, Babylonia, Media, Upper and Lower Egypt, Rome, Asia Minor, in the Occident, in Cyrenaica, et cetera. In the middle of the second century B. C. Oracula Sibyllina, addressing the "chosen people" could say: "Every land is full of thee and every sea."[63]

But the Diaspora grew in ever-widening circles, far outside the Graeco-Roman world. And wherever the Jews went, they carried their faith with them, except in a few cases where they had already become idolaters at heart, like those who went to Egypt in the time of Jeremiah, and the calf-worshippers of the Northern kingdom, exiled to Assyria. They had no religion worth preserving and were soon lost to Israel. Concerning the two thousand Jewish families that Antiochus the Great settled in Phrygia and Lydia, Talmud says specifically that the Phrygian Jews had given up their religion and, therefore, broken off every communion with their brothers at Jerusalem. Since 70 A. D., when they were forbidden to pay tax to Jerusalem, they forgot their language and their religion and were absorbed into the Pagan cult of Sabazius, in case they were not won over to Christianity.[64] In the near East many Jews undoubtedly embraced Islam, either by force or by persuasion. But these are exceptions. The Jews have been remarkably loyal to the religion of their fathers, and especially did they attempt to spread their faith by proselyte-propaganda in the early Roman empire.

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[62] Acts 2:5, 9-11.

[63] Sibyl. Or. 3:27; cf. I Macc. 15.

[64] Hugo Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen in Hellenistisch-Römischen Zeitalter (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1930), p. 117.

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In Mesopotamia the Jews lived in closed settlements. We hear very little of any missionary propaganda here, but the Christian missionaries lamented the fact that they were opposed by Jewish propaganda.[65] From Babylonia the Jews carried their faith by migration to the Arabian Peninsula where they found a strong following. "It hung upon a hair, that the whole of Arabia fell to the Jews," says Renan.[66] In Southern Arabia there was founded a Jewish Himyarite Kingdom, governed by a dynasty converted to Judaism. This kingdom survived until it was swallowed up by the conquering Islam. From Persia the Jews migrated to India and found on the Coromandel Coast a friendly reception. To the Malabar Coast came Joseph Rabban with seventy families. By treaty right, he was given permission to build synagogues, to convert Hindus to Judaism, and he himself was permitted to ride in a kingly style on horse or elephant. The inclusion in the treaty of a paragraph, like that of converting Hindus to Judaism, is highly instructive as to the missionary zeal of the Jews. Slaves were acquired, and there was some intermingling with the natives. Many slaves were admitted into Judaism and received their freedom with this step. Thus the race known as the black Jews of Cochin came into existence.[67]

Quite early the Jews penetrated to distant China. According to one tradition, the earliest settlements of Jews in China took place during the time of Antiochus the Great. They entered China from Bactria and Parthia about 200 B. C. According to a later tradition, they entered China during the Han dynasty, around 58-76 A. D. People of the early Roman Empire connected China with silk, which they were eager to get. It sold in Rome for an equal weight in gold. Phoenicians brought textiles from India and silk from China. Having the adventurous spirit, some Jews may have been tempted to brave the long and dangerous journey for a lucrative trade. They settled at Kaifengfu, Honan, which city for a period was capital of China. For several centuries their existence in China was entirely unknown to the outside world. Two Moslem travellers through India and China (851 A. D.) relate, that "Jews had been settled in that empire from time immemorial" and that "many for the sake of riches and preferment have abjured their own religion."[68] Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller, refers to the powerful commercial and political influence of the Jews. This was in 1286. They had then synagogues at Kaifeng-fu and Hangchow.[69]

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[65] S. Bernfeld, Die Lehren das Judentums (Leipzig: Gustav Engel, 1929), 3 vols., p. 347.

[66] *Ibid.*, p. 347.

[67] Sidney Mendelssohn, The Jews of Asia (London: Kegan Paul, French, Trubner & Company, 1920), p. 102.

In 1617 a Chinese Jew came to Father Ricci at Peking in order to find out if the white people, come from the West, had the same faith as he. Later on one of the Catholic missionaries visited Kaifeng-fu and their synagogue. On both sides of the pulpit were tablets. On one of them, written in golden letters, was the name of the emperor, on the other in Hebrew letters, the Shema. The Jews in China claimed to be the descendants of the tribe of Asher. They intermarried with the Chinese and seem to have done some proselytizing. But at the end of the nineteenth century, their group had dwindled to such an insignificance, that they could not keep their synagogue in repair, and they were compelled to dispose of it. After about two thousand years of history in China, the Jewish community is no more.[70] But one is still able to recognize some Jewish traits in otherwise perfectly Chinese faces in the streets and in the bazaars of Kaifeng-fu. Some of their descendants are to be found in Moslem or Christian communities, but it is to be feared that a large part lapsed into polytheism.[71]

Down in Africa, in Abyssinia, we have a Jewish-Abyssinian type of Jews. They are preponderantly black. When and why their forefathers settled in Abyssinia is mostly a matter of conjecture. The theory most acceptable to scholars is that the Jewish elements of the Falashas (emigrants) proceed from Himyarites captured in Ethiopia by King Kaleb, conqueror of Dhu-Nuwas. They took refuge in the mountains and converted a part of the Aagaus and through intermixture with them, produced the Falasha type. The Falashas are in possession of the whole Jewish Bible, except the book of Esther, and many religious customs, e. g. the synagogue, but are ignorant of Purim or Chanucka. This seems to indicate that their conversion took place in the first century B. C. Their religion is pure Mosaism, but they know nothing about Mishnah or Talmud, or Hebrew. Circumcision is performed on the eighth day on both boys and girls. The operator is a woman. A first-born must marry a woman who is also a first-born.[72]

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[68] _Ibid._, p. 136. [69] _Ibid._, p. 139.

[70] Albert Katz, _Die Juden in China_ (Berlin: Verlag von A. Katz, 1900), pp. 12 ff.

[71] It is to be noticed that the Jewish race is still strongly represented in China. At the same time as the old colony at Kaifeng-fu dwindled to nothingness, other groups of Jews came by sea and settled in the open ports. In 1939 alone, some 25,000 Jews arrived in Shanghai as refugees from Europe.

20

It has been necessary to discuss the widespread dispersion of the Jews among the nations somewhat in detail because Jewish proselyte-propaganda, almost without exception, had its nerve center and its motivation in the Jewish community, in the Jewish worship, and in the Jewish synagogue. Wherever there was a group of ten male Jews, there they had Jewish worship, and generally a Jewish synagogue. Judaism was a highly ritualistic religion. Attitude and behaviour in religious worship counted so much with them. God was great and holy and just; man was insignificant, impure, and self-centered. Man needed to give expression in worship of his sense of humility, repentance and helplessness. This attitude toward the divine is occasionally found in polytheistic religions, too, but generally speaking it is totally absent. The solemnity and reverence and earnestness in their worship never failed to impress pagans, who witnessed it. Wherever there was a nucleus of Jewish worshippers, a synagogue, and a religious leader, there the proselyte-propaganda was at work.

The existence of a strong missionary movement among Jews during our period is corroborated by Jewish, pagan, and Christian writers. Philo writes: "The laws of Moses influence all nations, barbarian and Greeks, the inhabitants of continents and islands, the Eastern nations and the Western nations, Europe and Asia; in short, the whole habitable world from one extremity to the other.[73] Horace speaks of attending the Jewish synagogue as a natural thing.[74] Juvenal asks his friend, "In what synagogue may I find you?"[75] Josephus writes, "The multitude of mankind itself have had a great inclination of a long time to follow our religious observances; for there is not any city of the Grecians, nor any of the barbarians, nor any nation whatsoever, whither our custom of resting on the seventh day has not come, and by which our fasts and lighting up lamps, and many of our prohibitions as to our food, are not observed."[76] Seneca speaks of the widespread observations of the Jewish Sabbath; by this, he thinks, the conquered Jews have imposed their laws upon their Roman conquerors.[77] Juvenal speaks of the decadence of Roman customs and of "whole families embracing Judaism. The father does not work on the Sabbath and abstains from pork, the sons are taught to despise the Roman gods and will only worship the God of heaven, and they cap it all by letting themselves be circumcised."[78]

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[72] I. Singer, Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk and Wagnall's Co., 1903), Article:"Falasha," V, 327.

[73] Philo ii. 137 (Yonge's Translation).

[74] Horace Sat.i. 9. 67-72. [75] Juvenal Sat. iii. 296.

There is also a corroboration of the missionary zeal of the Pharisees in the gospel according to Matthew: "You compass sea and land to make one proselyte."[79] Whether this passage has reference to a particular case,[80] or is a general statement, the fact still remains, and it is a significant testimony to the strenuous proselytizing activities and missionary interest within certain circles in Palestine. There can be little doubt that the zeal for proselyte-propaganda was far stronger in Diaspora than at the center of Judaism. But evidences show, that even within Palestinian circles, the missionary zeal was by no means wanting.

There is no direct evidence concerning the extent of proselytizing in pre-Maccabean times. But there were two forms of proselytizing, which always seemed natural and even inevitable to men in ancient times. The slave and the stranger, actually resident under the roof of the head of the household, however foreign in blood, were practically members of that household. It only required some appropriate ceremonies for them to be brought formally into it. So the first reference in the Old Testament to circumcision especially notes, that not merely Abraham but all his household, the slave born there and those bought with money were circumcised.[81] We are told that Abraham had "three hundred and eighteen trained men, born in his house."[82] Down through the centuries a constant, considerable accretion to the Jewish people must have taken place in this way.

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[76] Joshua Against Apion. ii. 40.

[77] Seneca De Civitate Dei. vi. 11.

[78] Juvenal Sat. xiv. 96-106. [79] Matt. 23:15.

[80] Moriz Friedländer, Die Religiösen Bewegungen innerhalb des Judentums im Zeitalter Jesu (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1905), pp. 32-34; Willoughby C. Allen, "Matthew," Int. Crit. Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), p. 246.

But during the Maccabean times new and more aggressive missionary methods were employed. The Hasmonean dynasty settled once and for all the troublesome Idumean question by forcefully converting them to Judaism.[83] Aristobulus used the same method in converting the Itureans in Northern Galilee.[84] Instead of being an obscure Syrian tribe, the Hasmoneans made of Judea a powerful nation, one of the strongest in that part of the world. They were zealous for the God of their fathers. Had not the prophets spoken of the time when nations should flock to Zion to worship the true God? There can be no wrong in applying forceful methods when it is for their own temporal and eternal benefit. So these rulers reasoned, and they acted accordingly. What would have happened if the Hasmonean power had lasted for some centuries and continued to grow? Would they have continued the same proselytizing policy in regard to other neighboring people? It was a political expediency and as such it was a signal success.

The Gentiles actually joined the Jewish people in increasing numbers. The rise of the Jewish nation to political power acted as an incentive to some, the religious fervor of the Jews, and their worship ceremonies, and their gorgeous temple at Jerusalem stimulated others. Kings found it to their advantage to be on friendly terms with the Hasmoneans and the Jews, and even to accept their religious worship. The Chamberlain of Queen Candace in Ethiopia was perhaps a proselyte to Judaism.[85] The royal family of Adiabene accepted the Jewish faith and had it propagated in their Kingdom.[86] Drusilla, the sister of King Agrippa, married Azizus, the king of Emesa upon his consent to be circumcised, and Bernice, widow after Herod, king of Chalcis, married Polemo, king of Cilicia, after he had been circumcised.[87]

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[81] Gen. 17:23, 27. [82] Gen. 14:14.

[83] Josephus Ant. xiii. 9.

[84] Israel Goldberg, Outline of Jewish Knowledge (New York: Bureau of Jewish Education, 1931), p. 434.

[85] Acts 8:26,ff. [86] Jos. Ant.xx. 2-4. [87] Jos.Ant.xx.7.

At Rome, in noble Roman circles, there was a predilection for Judaism. Fulvia, wife of the Senator Saturninus, was converted to Judaism. Poppaea Sabina, the mistress and later the Queen of Nero, was a proselyte. Josephus calls her a religious (θεοσεβήs) woman.[88] Suetonius and Cassius Dio agree in their account that Flavius Clemens and his wife, Flavia Domitilla, fell victims to the bloodthirsty suspicion of Domitian in the year 95.[89] Clemens was the son of Vespasian's brother, Flavius Sabinus, and so Domitian's first cousin. He was married to his own and the emperor's cousin, Domitilla. Talmudic reports testify that the God-fearing Senator, upon the advice of his God-fearing wife, took the poison which he always carried in a capsule on his body. By his death he stopped the execution of the decree of extermination levelled at the Jews. Clemens was executed and Domitilla banished to the island Pandataria. Before his death the Senator is said to have had himself circumcised.[90] The Jews in their proselyte-propaganda seem to have been exceedingly successful in converting men and women of influence and social standing. Politics and marriage played some part, that is true, but there can be no doubt that many became proselytes out of conviction and sincere admiration for the monotheistic religion of the Jews.

Although the Jews were very fortunate in their proselytizing activities among the social elite, their greatest success lay with the common people. The women were more impressionable and responded more readily than did the men. In Damascus nearly the whole female portion of the inhabitants was devoted to Judaism. The Jewish rite of circumcision, so repugnant to many men in the Roman empire, did not apply to women, and they consequently found the entrance requirements less severe. In Antioch a large number of Greeks attended the religious services in the synagogues, and the Jews treated them as in a certain sense part of themselves.[91] Paul in Acts addressed those assembled in the synagogue as "Men, Israelites, and those of you who fear God."[92]

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[88] Jos. Ant. xx. 8. 11.   [89] Cassius Dio lxvii. 14.

[90] Hermann Vogelstein, History of Jews in Rome (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1940), p. 71.

[91] Emil Schürer, A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886), III, 167.

[92] Acts 13:16.

It is necessary to point out that there were degrees of conversion. Full proselytes were those who accepted the three essential obligations: circumcision, the bath of purification, and the sacrifice in the temple. Half proselytes were those who accepted monotheism, the moral precepts of Torah, and the Noachian commandments. These were the "God-fearers." They attended the worship in the synagogue and had entirely given up idolatry, but the food laws and the rite of circumcision were repugnant to them. Everywhere Paul came on his missionary tours he found those two classes of proselytes joined up with the synagogues.

The Jewish propaganda succeeded in implanting the essential ideas of the God of Israel in the pagan world. It was not only the full proselytes and the "God fearers" that had been influenced thereby, but also many of the intelligentsia and the cultured classes, who despised the superstitious idolatry of the common people.[93]

Some authorities in this field are of the opinion that the proselyte-propaganda practically ceased with the destruction of Jerusalem. But this is not the case. It put a damper on the missionary zeal for a time and slowed down the missionary activities as long as the feeling of animosity reigned supreme. But it started again with new fervor after the rebellions, with a slightly different emphasis. According to Josephus, there prevailed in his days, among the inhabitants of Greek and barbarian cities, a great zeal for the Jewish religion. This refers to Domitian's last years, two decades after the fall of Jerusalem, in 70 A. D.[94] This goes to show that the Jewish insurrection did not quench the Gentiles' interest in Jewish religion. Consequently the proselyte propaganda went on as before as long as the missionary zeal within the Jewish communities continued to burn bright and the Gentiles kept up their interest in the Jewish religion. Catastrophies, prohibitions, and persecutions could not extinguish the missionary activities. It was first when the missionary spirit died out in Judaism, that missionary activities ceased.

The proselyte propaganda in the Gentile world had a double purpose in view: to create among the Gentiles a more favorable attitude to Judaism, and to draw Gentiles as proselytes to the Jewish communities. After the destruction of Jerusalem and the Bar Cochba revolt, the first aim became much more important than it had been before. The kingdom of Judea was no more, the city of Jerusalem was in ruins, the temple had gone up in smoke, and the entire people of the Jews was in the Diaspora, living among strangers and at their mercy. It became more necessary than ever for the Jews to employ apologetics and propaganda to ward off attack and to gain the favor and the good will of their neighbors. Instead of ceasing their missionary activities, they redoubled them. Even if circumstances made it necessary for them to put more emphasis on the first aim, they by no means neglected the second. The intense hatred caused by the revolt of the Jews soon died down, and proselytes continued to come in, even influential men and women, like Flavius Clemens and his wife.

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[93] Ch. Guignebert, Le Monde Juif vers le Temps de Jesus (Paris: La Renaissance due Livre, 1935), p. 305.

[94] Josephus Contra Apion. ii. 39.

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Religious competition urged them on. Besides Judaism, there were other cults doing missionary work. Some of the Mystery Religions had been on the field for a long time and continued to go strong. New Mysteries were coming, and probably the most formidable rival was Christianity. Judaism and Christianity both preached monotheism, used the same sacred Book, et cetera. At first they were not so far apart and were easily mistaken one for the other. When the lines of separation became more distinct, and they came to be more or less opposed to one another, this put new oil upon the missionary flame. In a world where missionary activities were so intense, the only way to survive was to get the most followers. It was a question of swim or sink, live or die. Their position in the Gentile world made it necessary for them to defend themselves, and this they did in three ways: by answering their critics--apologetics--, by attacking their critics --polemics--, and by stretching out a friendly hand across the street, seeking for a religious hand-clasp--propaganda. It was a war of both defense and offense, followed by an offer of peace.

The Church Fathers testify almost unanimously to the fact that Jewish proselyte-propaganda continued long after the destruction of Jerusalem, and long after Constantine had issued his famous edict in favor of Christianity. Justin Martyr speaks of the Jews as sending out apostles to convert people.[95] Chrysostom

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[95] Just. Trypho. 108; cf. 17. 117.

(347-407) was bitter against the Jews, because they exercised a great influence at Antioch over the people which adopted Jewish practices, and because the preaching in the synagogue seems to have been more appreciated than in the Church. "One must keep silent about the results of the Jewish proselyte-propaganda so as not to give the enemies of the Church cause for rejoicing."[96] Jerome (337-420), the well-known Bible translator and expositor, learned Hebrew with all his strength in order to know the original text of the Old Testament so that he would be able to counteract the Jewish propaganda.[97] Ambrose (340-397) employs strong words against the synagogue, because it was the stronghold of Jewish proselyte-propaganda.[98] Jewish proselyte-propaganda attempted also to bring Christians over to the Jewish fold. Some of the early Christians were Jews, and for many of them it was almost sacrilegious to break so completely with Judaism as some of the Christians had done. We find the Judaizers at work during the time of Paul. The Judaizers and the Jews could use strong arguments in favor of their case. Christ was circumcised, and so were the apostles; Christ kept the law, and so did the disciples. A special blessing was promised to Abraham and his seed; and in order to obtain that blessing, one had to be a Jew. Quite a few Christians were converted to Judaism. This we know from both Jewish and Christian writers, as well as from the laws promulgated, prohibiting the making of proselytes. If no proselytes were made, as some would have us believe, after the Jewish rebellions, such a law would have been absolutely meaningless.

Voices were heard cautioning against proselytizing: the proselytes come from selfish motives, they are not to be relied upon, they are causing the Jews more sorrow than joy, they will endanger the future purity of the race, et cetera. As long as these voices were in the minority, proselyte-propaganda went on, but when these voices grew to an overwhelming majority, they had a deadening effect upon the whole missionary propaganda. Let us now examine the missionary methods employed by the Jewish propagandists.

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[96] Simon Bernfeld, op. cit., p. 346.

[97] Ibid., p. 346. (Lucas S. 15.)

[98] Ibid., p. 346. (Lucas S. 17.)

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Attractive Features in Judaism

1. Ethical Monotheism

The success or failure of a new religion is due to a series of causes. One of these if the ability to satisfy the innermost desires and longings of men and to fill a need which the older religions have not been able to do. The missionaries of the new religion naturally stress those things that are new and significant and elaborate on their effectiveness and excellencies. Generally speaking, each religion is conscious of its weak points, but no one desires the other religion to point out these weaknesses. The religions in the Early Roman Empire had one common weakness, the Achilles' heel in which they all were vulnerable. This weakness was idolatry and polytheism. Here Judaism had something new to offer, an ethical monotheism.

Monotheism was not entirely unknown in the Graeco-Roman world. The earliest known monotheistic religion emerged in Egypt soon after 1400 B. C.[99] It flourished for a time, but met with such persistent opposition that it was obliged to give up the fight and surrender, it would seem, unconditionally. Mithraism came nearest to Monotheism, of those religions we have studied before. But it was not consistently so; and leaving out half of humanity from its fold and saving grace, it could hardly lay claim to be a monotheistic religion. Tacitly, it recognized other gods when arrangement was made with contemporary cults to serve the religious needs of their women-folks.

But Judaism was the first ethical and consistent monotheistic religion. It was through the teachings of their prophets that the Hebrews reached the stage of pure monotheism. Even with them, it required centuries before the last trace of idolatry disappeared. They first arrived at monolatry. God came to be considered the One God and their God, but He was not yet the God of all nations and of the universe. All through their history, up to this time, their great weakness had been serving other gods beside Yahweh. Finally they learned their lesson, through bitter experience. This took place in Diaspora by seeing the corruption of the polytheistic religions and their inability to satisfy the inner cravings of the human heart.

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[99] James Henry Breasted, The Dawn of Conscience (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 22.

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Polytheism and immorality are the two chief counts in the indictment which the Jewish writers bring against paganism. The anti-Jewish writings are not especially moderate in their condemnations; but with viciousness in their lives, they do not charge the Jews. This is quite significant because the Jews continually repeated this accusation.

Yahweh was the only true God. All the gods that the Gentiles worshipped were but idols, work of men's hands, and could not be considered as gods. The pagan deities were considered by the Jews either as angels, set by God over the seventy peoples of the world, or as demons, or deified dead men, or as nothing at all. The most sweeping condemnation of the idols was given by the prophet when he said: "They cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good."[100] But the God of Israel was the Creator of the universe and of all men. He was the Eternal God, the Almighty, the God of history, and the God of providence. He was an ethical God and demanded ethical living by those who served Him. He was the Holy One of Israel, and all unrighteousness and impurity was an abomination to Him.

The greatest abomination to Him was the serving and worshipping other gods. The idea behind this was: You become like the god you worship; you partake of his character, whether good or bad. The Mystery Religions stressed initiation to the detriment of ethical living. Their gods were by no means ethical gods, as their myths show. A religion cannot hope successfully to demand a higher ethics of its followers than that set by its god. The soil was pretty well prepared by the philosophers, who had used all their eloquence to lampoon, and ridicule, and condemn the whole system of idolatry. When, therefore, Judaism consistently preached a pure monotheism and an ethical God, there was a considerable response. The imageless worship in their synagogues appealed to those of a philosophical mind; and to the ethical demand, their conscience gave unqualified consent.

It was this ethical monotheism that brought many into the Jewish sphere of influence, either as full proselytes or as half-proselytes. And it was this doctrine that the Jews stressed more than any other in their proselyte-propaganda. In this particular point, they were strict, while in other points there was a tendency towards compromise, as we have seen. But both the Eleazar-type and the Ananias-type were equally strict on this fundamental requirement. The prophecy of Baruch had its fulfilment:

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[100] Jer. 10:5.

> I will scatter this people among the Gentiles that they may do good to the Gentiles. The Father and Creator of the universe did not abandon mankind. He gave a law and sent holy prophets to proclaim it and to teach the race of men that each of us might awaken and come to know that there is one God.[101]

The first step in conversion was the disposal of the idols. They were an abomination in the sight of God. They and Yahweh could not be worshipped together. One or the other must be discarded.

2. Righteousness and Morality

This naturally follows as a sequence from the idea of an ethical God. Being ethical He cannot do an immoral or unrighteous deed. It would be to act contrary to his nature. He is just and righteous, as well as compassionate and kind, but his demands are strict and binding. The prophet Micah expressed God's requirements in this way: "What does Jehovah require of thee but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with they God?"[102] Ritual righteousness was stressed by the Mystery Religions as well as by early Israel. Righteousness was looked upon mostly in a forensic sense. It was due to Amos and his successor-prophets that social righteousness came to be looked upon as more pleasing to God than ritual righteousness. With Amos, social righteousness is a religious service, without which ritual righteousness is but an empty shell and displeasing to God. In Hosea, righteousness becomes potentialized with mercy and kindness. With Isaiah, righteousness and justice are shown by solicitude for the weak and the helpless. He that is righteous endeavors to see that the weak, the poor, the orphaned and the widowed secure their rights. Righteousness becomes synonomous with morality, and the universe a moral universe.

There can be no doubt but that in some instances the Mystery Religions exercised a moral influence upon their devotees, in spite of the fact that these religions did not stress ethical living and social righteousness to the same extent as Judaism did. They stressed redemption through union with the gods and through initiations, letting the social righteousness more or less take care of itself. Judaism stressed the "turning" to God, a change of heart, expressed in righteous living, and righteous and kind deeds. Turning to God, in Judaism, meant a turning, too, in lovingkindness and mercy towards one's fellow men. Service to God cannot be divorced from social righteousness.

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[101] Apoc. of Baruch I:4; cf. S. Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 49.

[102] Micah 6:8.

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The Gentiles were urged to live a virtuous and righteous life, and the prospective proselytes were instructed in the "New Way." "Love righteousness, you judges of the earth" begins the "Wisdom of Solomon." And the Sibylline Oracles exhort: "Honor righteousness and deal oppressingly with no man, for this is the everlasting command to wretched mortals."[103] Philo speaks with pride of "those who have come over to the worship, become at once prudent, and temperate, and modest, and gentle, and merciful, and humane, and venerable, and just, and magnanimous, and lovers of truth, and superior to all considerations of money or pleasure."[104]

There can be no doubt that the high ethical and moral tone of Judaism was a drawing force for many Gentiles. The many women in every country, some of them in high social standing, that became proselytes or "God-fearers," may have done so for this very reason. The low moral tone in many of the myths of the Mystery Religions and the national gods may have driven many women to embrace Judaism with its strong moral tone and its emphasis upon morality and social righteousness. Schürer gives as one of the reasons for the success of proselytism, "the fact that the Jewish religion aimed at the practical realization of a moral and happy life."[105]

The righteous man will not be exempt from difficulties, persecutions, and sufferings. Job had to suffer in spite of the fact that God Himself bore him testimony, that he was "a perfect and upright man. "The suffering servant of the Lord," in performing its Lord-given task, had to accomplish it through suffering. But all will turn out right in the end. God will justify His servants. Their service to humanity will be great, and God will reward His faithful servants.

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[103] Sibyl. Or. iii. 630, 631.

[104] Philo On Repentance. 2.

[105] Schürer Geschichte. iii. 157 (English translation, Div. II, Vol. II), p. 269.

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3. Humane Laws

Judaism had her sacred Scripture, consisting of: Law, Prophets, and the writings, or Wisdom Books. Of these parts the Jews considered the Law as the most important. Part of the Law (Torah) was statutory and part was non-statutory. The statutory part is comparatively short, only about ninety verses in the whole Pentateuch. The great bulk of the statutory law is found in Exodus 21-23 and Deuteronomy 21-25. The Rabbis deduced 613 Pentateuchal precepts or roots from the Mosaic law. They were all revealed by God,and for this reason they were called "roots."[106]

These laws cover all of man's relations to God and man's relation to man. Confucius had much to say about man's relations to man, what he calls "The Five Relations." These include emperor and minister, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, friend and friend, but he leaves out altogether man's relation to God. Judaism put this relation first. God is the foundation and the capstone of the whole Jewish law; God is the Creator, the Lord of all, the Giver of the law and of every good gift. Men owe Him obedience, reverence, love, and worship. This is the first and the greatest commandment in the Law.

The family was the unit of society, and as such the most important of social institutions. The relationship between husband and wife, between parents and children, between the master and slave, and the duty of kinsmen to one another are all regulated by law. Considering the great antiquity of the law, and that it was given, at least in part, to a nomadic and tribal people, we all recognize it to be very humane and in advance of its time. Regulations and laws are given for disposal or sale of land, for loans, interest, bailments, torts, marriage and divorce, ransom, legal procedure, cities of refuge, et cetera. The social character of Jewish ethics is reflected in the Pentateuchal legislation concerning the Sabbath, the Sabbatical and Jubilee years, and land tenure. It forms the motive power of the other portions of the Law, as well as of the prophetic calls for justice between rich and poor, and the visions of peace within each nation and among the nations.

The status of women in Judaism was higher, and they were better protected by law than anywhere else. The purity of the home and of family relations, the love of parents for their children, the respect, honor, and filial piety shown to their parents and elders, the treatment of slaves and of their manumission, all impressed the community and society as something good and desirable. Probably no other law attracted so much attention as the law in regard to the Sabbath. Rest-days and festivals were not entirely unknown in ancient times, but what was new was their prevalence and their regularity every seventh day, and their religious nature. Such a law was looked upon by some as a sign of laziness and unprofitable for society by putting a stop to the productive activities of society.

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[106] Harris Franklin Rall and Samuel S. Cohon, *Christianity and Judaism Compare Notes* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1927), p. 66.

But what most people very soon came to realize was, that it was a beneficial law, helpful to society and men. Slaves in Jewish homes were not allowed to work on a Sabbath. It was a day of rest for them. They naturally came to look upon the Sabbath as a day of rest and recuperation. The animals of burden also got the benefit of such a law. The Sabbath legislation conferred so much blessing upon men, that similar laws have been enacted even in non-Christian lands.

Eight ostraka, ranging in date from 15 A. D. to 44 A. D. have recently been discovered. They are all dated by the "Sebaste Day" (emperor day). Deissmann thinks that the "Sebaste Day" was instituted in connection with the Emperor worship, and that the name "Lord's Day" may have been given as a protest against emperor worship. In three passages, where the "Sebaste Day" is mentioned in the inscriptions, the reference is to money payments of a religious nature.[107] There can be little doubt that it was the widespread observance of the Jewish Sabbath that brought into being the "Sebaste Day" as an imitation.

This Sabbath Day celebration was also welcomed by people that worked in Jewish business houses, and it became known as the Jewish worship-day, when Gentiles in large numbers frequented the Synagogue worship. The humane Jewish law, and especially the Sabbath law, drew many Gentiles into the fold of Judaism.

There is another aspect of the Sabbath that also worked in favor of Jewish proselytism. The Jews secured from the Roman Government exemption from military service and from appearing in court on the Sabbath for fear of breaking the Sabbath law and defilement. This appeared to the common people as a sign that the Jews had the ears and stood well with the authorities. This may have influenced some to become proselytes for material gains. I am sure such prospective candidates were not encouraged overmuch, but they may have been so persistently clever that they were admitted finally.

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[107] Adolph Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), pp. 364-5.

The Jewish law regarding the stranger and the proselyte may also have made an impression. The Decalogue, in its concise and comprehensive form, must also have impressed many as the quintessence of legislation.

The surrounding nations are pictured as being so impressed by the just and righteous law of Israel, that they wished to obtain such a law for themselves. The Nations

> shall hear all these statutes and say: Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who has God so nigh unto them . . . .? And what nation is there so great that has statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?[108]

4. An Attractive Cosmology

Judaism had a complete world-view, which seemed satisfactory to the philosophically-minded pagans. Judaism gave the impression of being not only a religion, but also a philosophy. In fact, Judaism could be and was presented as a philosophy, as a legalistic, a sacerdotal, and a mystic religion. It contained all these elements to a more or less degree.

As to the origin of the universe, Judaism had an attractive cosmogony. The coming into being of this universe has troubled philosophers of every age. Judaism presupposed and took for granted the existence of God. They never made an attempt to demonstrate it. Philo is the first Jewish writer who undertakes to prove the existence of God. But he wrote chiefly for Gentile readers.

Genesis gives undoubtedly the most satisfying cosmogony of antiquity. "In the beginning God . . . ." In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth.[109] There can be little doubt that the writer of Genesis was a monotheist in his cosmogony. Elohim is, as is well known, plural, but the verb is singular. The Creator is one, and all things were created by Him. The heavenly luminaries were created by God and ought, therefore, not to be worshipped in place of the Creator. The stars were thought of as affecting the fate and destiny of men. Astrology had been made almost into a science and a religion. Men were in constant fear of their evil influences. To such men, the Jewish cosmology appealed. These stars were neither to be feared nor worshipped. They were but created luminaries and could not and would not harm men in any way.

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[108] Deut. 4:6-8.

[109] Gen. 1:1.

Men were living in a friendly universe. God had created man in his own image. He was the Protector and Friend of every human being. He was the only Supreme Being, the Creator and the First Cause of the universe, the Ruler of the world and of the affairs of men, the Supreme Judge and Father, tempering justice with mercy, working out his purposes through agents, individuals, as well as nations and communicating his will through them. God's will and God's power are supreme in the world. He is a Spirit, unchangeable, everlasting, omniscient, omnipresent, merciful, abundant in goodness, gracious and longsuffering. He is the God of history. Nothing happens without his permission. He reveals himself in history. He links the destinies of men and nations. He is the rewarder of the good and the punisher of evil doers. One God, one universe, one human race, and there will come a time when there will be unity of worship, too. Some day, in some way, all men will come to worship one God, the true God, and the only and all-powerful God.

All idols will be destroyed and forgotten. The God who had power to create the worlds, he is God and is to be worshipped. Man is the crown of all created beings. He can have communion with the Almighty. Man's existence on earth is limited in years. What happens after death? Man is immortal. God has prepared another and a better place for men. This world will some day be destroyed, but those that fear the Lord will live on in a happier world. Sin entered this world and wrought havoc in God's creation. But new heavens and a new earth will emerge some day from which sin and evil will be forever banished. Men were beginning in earnest to question the plurality of gods, and they were asking pertinent questions as to the origin and destiny of the universe and of man. This world-view presented by Judaism seemed attractive and satisfying. The Graeco-Roman philosophers, the Stoics, and the Cynics had prepared the way. The cosmogony and cosmology of the Old Testament proved to be the magnetic needle which drew many pagans within the wings of Shekinah.

5. The Eschatological Hopes

It is true that Jewish eschatology deals primarily and principally with the final destiny of the Jewish nation and the world in general and only secondarily with the future of the individual. The chief concern of the Hebrew legislator, prophet and apocalyptic writer was Israel as a people of God and the victory of his truth and justice on earth. This purposeful scheme included the individual, too.

The Old Testament prophets spoke of the "Day of the Lord," as the future day of judgment. The faithful of the Lord were to receive their reward. God is to judge the people as nations, and the idolotrous nations will receive their judgments.

Later prophets spoke of the Messianic reign, when Israel's subjection to foreign powers will cease. The Holy Land will no longer be inhabited by strangers. Earth and man will be endowed with wondrous fertility.[110] Physical ailments and sickness will be no more, and the polluted temple will be replaced with a new and holy one.[111] Before this happens, a final and decisive struggle will be fought in which Israel will come out victoriously. Many of the wicked among the Gentiles will be wiped out, and then all the Gentiles will be converted to the true God, the God of Israel. "And all the nations which are in the whole earth, all shall turn and fear God truly, and all shall leave their idols, who err after their false error."[112] Then the Messianic reign will begin, the "Kingdom of God," called also the "Kingdom of Heaven," to avoid using the sacred name of God.

The "Golden Age" of Israel is in the future. Some nations, e. g. China, had their "Golden Age" in the hoary past. The Chinese have something to remember, but Israel had something great and good to look forward to. This "Golden Age" will be an age of perfect peace and harmony. All wars will cease and perfect good will shall reign supreme. The very nature of the wild animals will be changed.

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[110] Enoch 10:17-19. [111] Enoch 53:6; 91:13.

[112] Tobit 14:6.

People who have died will be resurrected. Ezekial seems to limit the resurrection to the Jewish nation,[113] as such. But in Daniel, the resurrection is extended to both the wicked and the righteous: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."[114] And in the Apocalypse of Isaiah, we read:

> He hath swallowed up death forever; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of His people will He take away from off all the earth . . . . Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise.[115]

Such eschatological hopes could not fail to impress people, who were eagerly looking for justice, righteousness, peace, immortality, and perfect felicity. Men in adverse circumstances look eagerly forward to something better. The "Golden Age," the "Kingdom of Heaven," a new world, where death did not reign, this was something to arouse hope, expectancy and longing in many a pagan heart.

Missionary Methods of Judaism

Judaism was not the first missionary religion in the Roman Empire. The Mystery Religions were the trail blazers, the pioneers in missionary propaganda. The Greek Mysteries were of European origin. The Oriental Mysteries came to Greece at an early date, and both the Greek and the Oriental Mysteries invaded the Latin speaking part of the Roman Empire. The religion which the Mysteries propagated was of the polytheistic and redemptive type, and they stressed initiation and secrecy and mystic communion with the gods through sacraments, et cetera.

When Judaism entered the Graeco-Roman world, it was already accustomed to strange and foreign cults coming from other shores. Judaism, in contrast to the Mysteries, was a strict monotheistic religion with no secret initiatory rites, no weird sacred objects to show, and it had no oath binding to secrecy. Judaism was the first thoroughgoing monotheistic religion that invaded Europe, and the Graeco-Roman world in particular.

The Mystery Religions prepared the way for Judaism, and

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[113] Ezk. 37.

[114] Dan. 12:2.

[115] Isa. 25:8; 26:19.

Judaism did the same service for Christianity. The services the Mysteries rendered Judaism consisted in this, that they had created a dissatisfaction with things as they were, and had acquainted the people with other religions and their specific, religious value.

Our task is not to evaluate the different religions, but to study their missionary methods. Naturally they cannot be placed on the same level. But they all tried to do the best they could with the light they had and with the material they had to work with. This much may be said in passing, that coming, as we do, via the Mysteries to Judaism, we have very much the same feeling as a man coming out of the darkness and heaviness of a cave into the brightness of the day and the fresh and invigorating air.

1. Concentration of Propaganda Efforts Upon Certain Classes of People

The earliest form of proselytism among the Jews had for its aim the conversion of the slaves and the aliens living in their land and in their midst. This constituted a very fruitful field for proselytizing endeavors. These two forms of proselytizing always seemed natural, even inevitable to a man of ancient times. Slaves and strangers, although foreign in blood, were practically members of that household and that community in which they resided. Only a short step was necessary to bring them formally into complete union by appropriate ceremonies. The first Biblical reference to circumcision especially notes that not merely Abraham, but all his household, the slave born there and those bought of strangers, were circumcised.[116] Slaves could be bought from the surrounding nations, or from strangers dwelling in the land, and of the descendants of those born in the land.[117] Such slaves became the possession of their master and were left to his children for an inheritance like other property. All males, though of foreign blood, whether bought for money or born in the house, were to be circumcised.[118] Thus they became an integral part of the community and were admitted to eat the passover. They were not to be required to work on the Sabbath.

A considerable number of aliens in this way came into fellowship with Israel down through its history; and this was a very promising field for proselytizing activities. Abraham had 318 trained servants, born in his own house,[119] which were among those circumcised together with Abraham himself. We read of a "mixed multitude that went up also with them" out of the land of Egypt, and which later caused the whole Israel to murmur.[120] What was this mixed multitude? Kalisch supposes that it consisted of native Egyptians anxious to escape the tyranny of the kings. Perhaps it is more probable that it consisted of fugitives from other subject-races, or slaves, anxious for freedom. They may have been half-breeds; we read of the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian.[121] There is no further notice of this multitude. Some of them may have returned to Egypt again; but some must have entered into Caanan with the children of Israel. The children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees and dwelt with the tribe of Judah.[122] Many of the aborigines of Canaan, which the Israelites did not drive out or annihilate,[123] must gradually have been absorbed into the community of Israel. They constituted one of the groups from which slaves could be bought, and as such they were circumcised and gradually absorbed into the community. Judges tells us that these aborigines became tributaries to Israel.

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[116] Gen. 17:23, 27.

[117] Lev. 25:44-46.

[118] Gen. 17:27; Ex. 12:44, 48.

This kind of proselytizing started with Abraham, went on through the centuries down to the time when Israel lost its independence, and was rooted up from its homeland, Palestine, at the rebellion led by Bar Cochba. We have no record of anything but persuasion being resorted to in this type of conversion of the slaves. The position of a slave was such in antiquity that he most likely willingly assented to be circumcised, hoping thereby to gain some privileges hitherto withheld from him by his master. The proselytizing of slaves continued in the Diaspora in a slightly different mode.

In Talmud it is forbidden to sell a bondman or a bondwoman to a Gentile master. When manumitted a Canaanite bondman or bondwoman becomes a convert of righteousness and as such undergoes a second baptism. Manumission in Israel could take several forms. Where a master gave a free woman in marriage to his slave, or put phylacteries on him, or caused him to read three verses from Torah in public, his action was understood as freeing him, and he should set him free and give him a deed of manumission.[124]

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[119] Gen. 14:14.

[120] Ex. 12:38; Num. 11:4.

[121] Lev. 24:10.

[122] Jud. 1:16.

[123] Jud. 1.

Manumission on religious grounds was practised throughout ancient Greece, and it even made its way into Jewish and Christian ecclesiastical custom.[125] The procedure generally took this form: The owner comes with the slave to the temple, sells him there to the god and receives the purchase money from the treasury, the slave having previously paid it in there out of his saving. The slave is now the property of the god; not, however, a slave of the temple but a protégé of the god against all the world, and especially his former master. He is now a completely free man; at the utmost, a few pious obligations to his old master are imposed upon him. The rite takes place before witnesses, a record is taken and often perpetuated on stone. The usual form of such a document runs like this: "Date. N. N. sold to the Pythian Apollo a male slave named S. Y., at a price of . . . . minae, for freedom." Then follow any special arrangements and the names of the witnesses.[126] We find this kind of manumission among the Jews in two stone records from Panticapaeum, the one of which can be definitely dated, 81 A. D.[127]

The sages approved manumission for any religious purpose, even so slight a one as completing the number ten required for celebration of public worship.[128] That the practice of making proselytes of slaves persisted is indicated by the laws of Hadrian against circumcising a slave. A third century Palestinian Amora permits Jews to buy slaves, because thereby they may be brought "under the wings of Shekinah."

"The heathen slave acquired by a Jew is circumcised, baptized and consequently included within certain limits of Jewish law, such as the observance of the Sabbath."[129]

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[124] Jewish Encyclopedia, Art. "Slaves," XI, 403.

[125] Adolf Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), p. 325.

[126] Ibid., p. 327. [127] Ibid., p. 325.

[128] Jewish Encyclopedia, XI, 406.

[129] William G. Braude, Jewish Proselyting in the First Five Centuries of the Common Era (Providence, R.I.: Brown University, 1940), p. 15.

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2. The Application of Force

The Hasmonean kings, after being victorious over their neighbors, in their eagerness to convert them to Judaism, and in the flush of victory, resorted sometimes to the use of threats and force. At times, this method led to the desired results, and at other times it was unsuccessful. It would, indeed, be much more to our liking simply to ignore the facts and overlook this part of our study. There are similar things in our Christian history which we might wish were not there. But historical facts are there to stay, whether we like them or not. The Hasmonean dynasty had, by successful wars and wise international policy, raised the Kingdom of Judea to one of the most powerful in that part of the world. Some of the neighbors of the Jews had been a constant thorn in the flesh. So had, for example, the Idumeans moved into the land of Judah, after it had been depopulated by the Babylonian Exile. They were idol worshippers and a constant temptation and snare to the Jews, who lived in those parts. The Hasmonean rulers, it seems, were determined to conquer their neighbors and convert them to the worship of Yahweh. The Maccabean kings, John Hyrcanus, Aristobulus, Alexander Jannaeus, planned for and dreamt of a great kingdom, but in all of their conquests, they had the conversion of the conquered nations as one of their chief aims.[130]

John Hyrcanus, after capturing and destroying the fortresses of the Idumeans, gave them the alternative of migrating from the country or accepting the Jewish religion.[131] The Idumeans chose to stay, "and thus it happened for the first time, that any people were compelled to embrace Judaism."[132] It was a radical step, cutting the Gordian knot once and for all. The Idumeans seem to have been quite satisfied with their new faith.

Aristobulus, following in his father's footsteps, compelled the Itureans, who dwelt at the foot of Mount Hermon, to embrace Judaism. Strabo says that he "obtained a part of the nation of the Itureans and bound them by the bond of circumcision.[133]

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[130] Guignebert, op. cit., p. 295.

[131] Josephus Ant. 13. 9. 1.

[132] Israel Goldberg, Outline of Jewish Knowledge.

[133] Josephus Ant. 13. 11. 3.

During the reign of Alexander Jannaeus, when the Maccabean kingdom enjoyed its widest extent, we read that the Jews "destroyed Pella because the inhabitants would not change their religious rites for those peculiar to the Jews."[134] It would seem to have been a pretty general policy of the Maccabees to consolidate their conquest of neighboring territories by converting the peoples to Yahweh. Their policy may have been mistaken--we think it was--but so was the policy of many a Christian monarch. St. Erik of Sweden Christianized the Finns very much the same way as John Hyrcanus did. Many other examples might be cited.

But it was not only the kings that favored such a policy. The same idea seems to have gripped the people in general, too. Josephus relates that at the beginning of the revolt, some men came into Galilee from Trachonites. "The Jews would force them to be circumcised and change their religion," if they desired to stay among them. Josephus remonstrated with the multitude, saying that those who had fled to them for refuge ought not to be persecuted. When the multitude persisted in their demand and made an assault upon the house in which they lived at Taricheae, "in order to kill them," Josephus sent them away secretly into a place of safety.[135]

Horace, in his Satires, writes: "And we, like the Jews, will compel you to make one of our throng."[136] It is not quite clear whether Horace refers to a historical fact known to him, or if he only wants to impress upon his readers the zeal exhibited by the Jews in their proselyte-propaganda. Most likely it was the latter. It is, of course, not excluded but that the practice of the Hasmonean kings in converting the Gentiles by force was known to him. Members of the Idumean dynasty, ruling Palestine, visited Rome off and on, and these facts could very well have been made known to him either by them or by someone else. Be that as it may, the other instances we have referred to are pretty well generally accepted by Jewish and Christian writers, ancient and modern.

3. Literary Propaganda

The literary form of the proselyte-propaganda took on various shapes. It expressed itself in form of apologetics when its aim was to answer the various accusations hurled against the Jews and their religion. Generally speaking, the accusations had to do with such matters as these: the Jewish nation in point of antiquity is inferior to other cultural nations, the Jews are atheists, have no culture and have not in any way enriched science, they are disloyal in refusing to worship the emperor, their isolation shows a lack of humanity and true philanthropy, their peculiar rites of circumcision, abstinence from pork, and the keeping of the Sabbath Day are in derision or contempt of other rites practised by other religions. As long as these misconceptions remained unanswered, they stood there as mighty hindrances for proselytizing. Their first aim was to clear away the obstacles and to defend themselves. Their next step was to attack the stronghold of paganism, its immorality, its polytheism, its beliefs, et cetera. This was offensive warfare, polemics, generally fought with heavy artillery. Then the next step was various kinds of propaganda, pleading with the Gentiles to leave idolatry and worship the only true God, the God of the whole universe and of all mankind, to mend their ways and to part with immorality and unethical living.

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[134] *Ibid*. xiii. 15. 4.

[135] Josephus *Life*. 23, 31.

[136] Josephus *Sat*. 1. 4.

The literary propaganda covered the following fields: fostering the missionary spirit at home, defending their own religion, direct appeal to the Gentiles; and it was done under the form of historical novels, wisdom literature, apologetics, and pseudepigraphical writings.

(a) Fostering the missionary spirit at home through literature-propaganda.

The book of Jonah was a stirring missionary appeal to Israel. Here was Assyria, the age-long enemy of the chosen people, and steeped in the grossest kind of idolatry. Jonah was told to go there to announce the coming judgment over Nineveh. Sharing the common contempt of his people for a cruel enemy, he was unwilling to go. He tried to escape by going to sea, only to be caught in his own devices. In his predicament, he repented and promised to go, if God only would save him from the sea. He was saved, and went and preached on the streets of Nineveh, with the result that the king with his people repented in sackcloth and ashes and turned to the Lord. Yahweh took pity on them and averted the impending doom. Jonah was displeased and disgruntled over the compassion of the Lord in sparing the sinful city, and prayed the Lord to take his life. Jonah went eastward outside the city and made himself a booth and sat there. A gourd grew up and gave him shadow over his head. But when the gourd withered away and the rays of the sun struck his unprotected head, he became still more disgusted. Then the Lord said to him,

> Thou hast pity on the gourd for which thou hast not labored neither madest it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their left hand and their right; and also much cattle.[137]

The great lesson this book purposed to teach the Israelites was, that the Lord their God took pity upon the Gentiles and sent a messenger to warn them of impending doom. The Assyrians, although steeped in the most degraded idolatry, could still repent and turn to the Lord, when he became known to them. The Lord accepted their repentance and saved the great city. What happened in Nineveh may happen in other Gentile lands, provided the prophets of the Lord can be persuaded to go there.

The book of Ruth describes the story of Naomi, her husband, and two sons. The husband and sons all died in Moab, and Naomi wanted to return to her native land. Her two daughters-in-law were both Moabitesses. Ruth refuses to part with her mother-in-law and accompanies her to Bethlehem where she married Boaz and became an ancestress of David, the great king.[138] Ruth belonged to those of which the Law said, "An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generations shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever."[139] In Philo, a resident in the Jewish community in Alexandria, we find words directed toward the Jews, bidding them welcome the foreigner. The gist of the law concerning proselytes, he says, is that they, having given up so much, should receive generously of cities and houses and friends; that they ought to have an equal share in all laws, immunities and privileges; and that they should not be spoken to unsympathetically or harshly.[140] In the Rabbinic literature we meet with the expression "to bring under the wings of the Shekinah," implying not only the coming of the proselyte,[141] but also the outstretched hand of welcome. In all missionary enterprises, the cultivating of the "Home Base" is of the utmost importance, especially, as it was in Judaism, if a large per cent of the home constituency is not interested in that type of work.

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[137] Jonah 4:10,11.

[138] Ruth 4: 13-22.

[139] Deut. 23:34.

[140] Philo *On Monarchy*. 1. 7.

(b) Defensive and propaganda literature.

This literary form of propaganda and defense was especially active in those communities in which Jews and Greeks spoke a common language and partly shared a common culture. Even books intended primarily for Jewish circulation contain polemics against polytheism and attacks upon pagan customs, which could have been only for the purpose of training the Jews in defense and propaganda methods and to serve a missionary purpose, should the book fall into the hands of a Gentile. Jewish authors write in Greek to further Jewish propaganda. It was their desire to create a better understanding and love for Jewish thought and religion and monotheism.

The author of the "Wisdom of Solomon" appeals to the Gentiles in the character of the great king, who had become traditionally associated with Jewish wisdom. He appeals to men in authority:

> Love righteousness, ye that be judges of the earth. Hear, therefore, ye kings and understand; learn ye judges of the ends of the earth; give ear, ye that have dominion over much people and make your boast in multitudes of nations; because your dominion was given you from the Lord. Unto you, therefore, O princes, are my words, that ye may learn wisdom and fall not from the right way.[142]

Some Jew in Egypt wrote the story of Tobit to exalt the Jewish ideal in the eyes of the Gentiles and Jews alike. The Hebrews sought to make their religion and their culture known in the stirring Greek world. The book of Tobit is best understood as part of this missionary movement in Egyptian Judaism.[143] Other apocryphal books have either a primary or a secondary missionary interest. They were part and parcel of the Jewish missionary enterprise in the Hellenistic world.

Two Jewish writers of this period deserve a special mention. They are Josephus and Philo. Josephus writes for Gentiles.

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[141] Ruth 2:12. [142] Wisdom 1:1; 6:1-3a; 6:9.

[143] Edgar J. Goodspeed, The Story of the Apocrypha (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 13.

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He adapts himself to the capacity of his Greek readers in order to persuade them to receive his picture of Judaism with interest. He was not what we would call a religious man, but he was enthusiastically interested in the Jewish antiquities and writes to make them known to Greek-speaking Gentiles. They could not but get a better idea of the Jews and their religion after perusing his voluminous writings. He wrote an apology for the Jews and their religion, Contra Apion.

Philo wrote from Alexandria. He was part of the Jewish community there. He was a philosopher, well at home, both in Jewish and Hellenistic lore. He chose to interpret Judaism in Greek philosophical language. Judaism for him was the quintessence of all wisdom, and the God of the Hebrews the only God. Some of his writings may not have been written primarily for Gentile readers. But there can be little doubt now, after the appearance of L. Cohn's treatise "The Division of Philo's Writings," that his three books, Life of Môses, were written as an apologetic for Judaism and for propaganda purpose.[144] The tracts on the three virtues are especially directed towards Gentiles, the last of them being an appeal from Moses, lover of the human race, to all men to leave the worship of creatures for the Creator, the mob-sovereignty for the well-ordered democracy, folly for wisdom, cowardice for courage, injustice for righteousness, intemperance for temperance.[145] His enthusiasm, wide knowledge and scholarly presentation enhanced the standing and appreciation of Judaism among the intelligentsia of the Graeco-Roman world and indirectly, at least, furthered the missionary movement.

A very important evidence for the existence of a well-planned, enthusiastic proselyte propaganda in Judaism is the appearance of such propaganda under pagan name, "masquerading under a heathen mask."[146] One of the most important elements in this literature is the Jewish Sibylline Oracles.[147] The Sibyl was in pagan antiquity the semi-divine prophetess concerning the fate of cities and kingdoms. She is represented as a nymph, dwelling by streams and in grottoes. As far as can be ascertained, it was in the second century B. C. that an extensive Sibylline Oracle of Jewish origin was first put in publication from Alexandria. The result seems to have been favorable, for imitators soon arose.

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[144] L. Treitel, "Das Judentum als geistige weltreligion," Archiv für Religionswissenschaft, Vol. XXIV, 1926.

[145] Philo On Repentance. 1. 2.

[146] Schürer, The Jewish People, III, Div. II, 270.

[147] Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, 1913, pp. 368-406.

These oracles were especially adapted for being turned to account in the interest of religious propaganda. A few centuries earlier, the Mysteries of Magna Mater owed its introduction into Rome to an Anatolian Sibylline Oracle. A method that had proved so useful and advantageous for the Anatolian Mysteries, why should not the same method, considered at that time both proper and legitimate, be employed by other religions? These oracles were of apocryphal origin, in private possession, circulated without control, and might be completed and added to at pleasure. What could be done by the Greeks and by the Anatolians could also be done by the Jews. These oracles enjoyed a high reputation among religiously disposed minds.

It was difficult for the Jews to gain a hearing in their own name, and so they adopted this expedient of defending themselves and propagating their faith under cover of the illustrious personages of antiquity. Pagan poets were made to bear witness to the sublimity of the Jewish faith and pagan oracles were made to predict a mighty destiny for the Jewish race.[148] Here is one example of the earnest appeal to the Gentiles themselves:

> O ill-starred mortals, let not these things be, and drive not the great God to divers deeds of wrath; but have done with swords and moanings and killing of men, and deeds of violence, and wash your whole bodies in ever-running rivers, and, stretching your hands to heaven, seek forgiveness for your former deeds, and with praises ask pardon for your bitter ungodliness. God will grant repentance and will not slay. He will stay His wrath once more, if with one accord ye practice precious godliness in your hearts.[149]

(c) Literature for instructing the prospective proselytes.

The conjecture by Hennecke, that the tractate *The Two Ways* was of Jewish origin and used to instruct the proselytes, is steadily gaining ground. From this catechism we gather that the proselytes were taught the sanctity of the Decalogue, the holiness of God, the heinousness of idolatry, and the necessity of circumcision.[150] How is it, if the circumcision is holy and so absolutely necessary that it is not included in the Decalogue? This question was asked by the proselyte Aquila from Eliezer ben Hyrcanus. He answered: "The commandment of circumcision was a preliminary condition for the Sinaitic revelation and for this reason it had to be given before the Decalogue."

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[148] W. D. Morrison, *The Jews under Roman Rule* (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1899), p. 404.

[149] *Sibyl.Or.* iv. 62-70.

It is not to be supposed that the literary propaganda was the most effective. It was limited by the very field for which it was intended. The chief object of attack was the Greek polytheism and the viciousness of Greek life. In many extant books sexual excesses and perversions are made a constant reproach against the pagans. This is due not so much to the actual life depicted as to the attitude with which even good men regarded these particular incidents.[151]

4. Sacred Scripture, Septuagint

Closely related to the literary propaganda, but still quite distinct, was the use of Scripture as a form of missionary propaganda. After the destruction of the Temple, the sacred books became the most coveted and priceless possession of Judaism. It was the "Book of the Covenant," wherein Yahweh had revealed His will and made known His demands. Judaism claimed to be a revealed religion. In the Mystery Religions the priests held the first place. They were in possession of the secret formula of initiation. They could open and no one could close. They could shut and no one could open. In Judaism the priests occupied only a secondary place. The revealed will of God, His "Word," held the seat of preëminence.

The sacred books of Judaism were written in the Hebrew tongue, which was the sacred language of the Jews. In the Diaspora, the Jews, after several generations, forgot their sacred tongue. Greek became their everyday language. It was only on the Sabbath that Hebrew was used. But as it was not understood by the worshippers, it had to be translated into Greek. Oral translation naturally left very much to desire. It became a dire necessity for the Jewish congregations in the Diaspora to have a Greek translation of the Sacred Scriptures. This was the main reason for the translation, and a very pressing one. Another reason was that the Gentiles began increasingly to show an interest in the Sacred Scripture of the Jews and desired to have a translation in their own tongue. Then came the period in Judaism, when the missionary spirit took hold of the leaders and the people, and then their Sacred Scripture, the Septuagint (so called because it was believed that seventy scholars had taken part in the translation) became a very valuable asset.

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[150] Hennecke, Neutestamentlichen Apokryphen, p. 185. Cf. J. Bergmann, Jüdische Apologetik im Neutestamentlichen Zeitalter (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1908), p. 103.

[151] Max Radin, The Jews Among the Greeks and Romans (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1915), p. 160.

According to Aristeas, the Pentateuch was translated at the time of Philadelphus the second Ptolemy (285-247 B. C.), which translation, it is said, was encouraged by the king and welcomed by the Jews of Alexandria. It is not known when the other books of the Bible were translated.[152] But that it was done before any of the New Testament books were written is a foregone conclusion, as the New Testament writers quote almost exclusively from the Septuagint.

A new translation of the Sacred Scripture was undertaken by Aquila. He is said to have been a proselyte to Judaism and a pupil of Rabbi Akiba, and he lived during the reign of Hadrian (117-138 A. D.). Two reasons are given for this new translation: the appropriation of the Septuagint by the Christian Church; and its divergence from the accepted Masoretic text. Aquila's translation is said to have been literal and somewhat pedantic. It was popular with the Jews in the days of Origen, Jerome and Augustine. Apart from citations by Christian writers, only a few fragments have come down to us.[153]

Theodotion, in the second century A. D., made a second revision of Septuagint. His Greek gives a very readable text. His translation of Daniel entirely displaced that of Septuagint. Only fragments are found in Origen's Hexapla. Theodotion is sometimes said to have been a convert to Judaism.[154]

Symmachus, whose date is unknown, tried to smooth down Aquila's "un-Grecian Greek" by the use of both Septuagint and Theodotion. He was the best stylist of them all. Epiphanius says he was a Samaritan and a convert to Judaism.[155]

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[152] The Jewish Encyclopedia, Art. "Bible Translation" (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1905), p. 186.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid, p. 187.

The translation of the Old Testament made the Gentiles acquainted with Jewish religion and Jewish law. Luke's picture of the eunuch, returning home from a trip to Jerusalem, reading a roll of the prophets was not an isolated case.[156] Philo thinks that the Greek translation of the Old Testament was a most admirable thing and serviceable in the leading of Gentiles to the Jewish law.[157] The Septuagint was read in the Synagogue together with an expository sermon. Judaism appeared as something like a philosophy, its monotheism made an impression, and its creation story in Genesis helped them formulate their own cosmogony and cosmology. The claim to the possession of such an authoritative revelation in its Scripture attracted converts to Judaism, as it did afterwards to Christianity.[158] As a book, Septuagint was bulky, expensive, and inaccessible except for the well-to-do. But the reading and exposition of the Sacred Book in the synagogue constituted the chief attraction and exerted a tremendous influence in ever-widening circles. The Septuagint "kept millions in the old faith, to win fresh millions, for whom the Hebrew text would have remained a buried treasure."[159]

After the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, Judaism became more than ever a "book religion." Israel's religion became a Torah-religion. In the law, the Prophets and the Psalms, the Jews found an ever-regenerating power, a vitalizing and energizing force which brought comfort and strength and courage in times of severe testing. The law, not the Temple, became the bond of union that united the Jews all over the world. The great catastrophe of the ruining of the center of worship and the capture of Jerusalem increased rather than diminished the ties which united the people. It became evident that the real bond which kept them together was not the Temple but the Lord of the Temple, and His Torah. The God of Israel could not be confined within a sanctuary built by man, but His will was enshrined in Torah. So says he was a Samaritan and a convert to Judaism.[155]

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[155] The Jewish Encyclopedia, Art. "Symmachus," III, 187.

[156] Acts 8:27 f.

[157] Philo Life of Moses. 2. 5.

[158] G. F. Moore, Judaism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), Vols. I and II, passim.

[159] Hausrath, New Testament Times, I, 114. Cf. S. Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World, p. 52.

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[155] The Jewish Encyclopedia, Art. "Symmachus," III, 187.

[156] Acts 8:27 f. [157] Philo Life of Moses. 2. 5.

[158] G. F. Moore, Judaism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), Vols. I and II, passim.

[159] Hausrath, New Testament Times, I, 114. Cf. S. Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World, p. 52.

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5. Synagogue Worship

The name συναγωγή, both in the Talmud and the New Testament, means a meeting house for religious purpose. The word "synagogue" is not used by Josephus. He speaks of their proseuchae, a place of prayer, by the seaside.[160] Josephus also speaks of σαββατεῖον which would indicate that it was used chiefly during the Sabbath Day.

The origin of the Synagogue is not quite certain, but the theory expressed by Wellhausen, that the Synagogue originated in the Babylonian Exile as a necessary requirement to take the place of the Temple and to maintain the cultural communion among the exiles, has found favor with most of the Biblical scholars. It was further developed in Palestine during Ezra and Nehemiah and in the Diaspora. The scribes came to regard the synagogue institution as an unsurpassed instrument for the inculcating of the teaching of the Law. They accordingly invested it with divine sanction and ascribed its origin to Moses himself.[161]

We have archaeological evidences for the existence of Synagogues in Egypt as early as the third century B. C.,[162] and in Greece as early as the second century B. C.; the date of the earliest remains of a Synagogue found in Palestine is the first century A. D.

There was no specific law in regard to the Synagogue. The name is not even mentioned in the Old Testament. It may be argued that the Synagogue as an institution is in contravention to the command of the law. "But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come."[163] The Temple worship, as a national shrine, was highly important in its day and made some permanent contributions to the religion of Israel: It made the ancient worship of Israel a national one; it destroyed the prevalence of pagan ideas in Judaism; it gave to the ancient traditional sacrifice a spiritual meaning; it proved a bond of unity which prevented the Southern tribes from sharing the fate of the Northern, to whom exile meant dissolution;[164] it made the religion of Israel respected and known among the nations by the stateliness of its sanctuary and the impressiveness of its worship; and brought many proselytes and God-fearers there to worship. Especially the musical service, the singing of the Psalms, and the prayers, appealed to the pilgrims and to the Gentiles.

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[160] Jos. Ant. xiv. 10, 23.

[161] Cf. Jos. Contra Apion. ii. 18.

[162] Namely a synagogue inscription from the ancient Schedia-quarter of Alexandria, dated in the reign of Ptolemy III, Euergetes (247-221 B. C.). E. D. Sukemik, Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece (London: Oxford University Press, 1934).

[163] Deut. 12:5; cf. Deut. 12:11, 14.

But the destruction of the second Temple was a gain rather than a loss to Judaism and humanity. By the providence of God it was not allowed to survive its own usefulness. From a very early period there had been those who saw in the Temple a danger to the spirituality of the religion of Israel. Even Solomon in his dedicatory prayer is made to declare: "Heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee."[165] The prophet Jeremiah had warned the people of the first Temple that it was not inviolable. Even the earlier prophets had declared the sacrificial system harmful to true religion.

It was the Synagogue that saved Judaism from disintegration after the destruction of the second Temple. Synagogues had already become an established fact, and the non-sacrificial ritual of the synagogue soon became the distinguishing feature of Judaism, making its practice possible in every part of the world. The power and influence of the synagogue soon eclipsed that of the Temple at Jerusalem and gave birth both to the Church and the mosque. In contrast with the Temple, the Synagogue worship was new and simple. The practise of reading and expounding the Scripture to the assembly invested Judaism with a hitherto unknown spirituality. It was the genius of Israel which produced both the prophets and the Synagogue as a house of prayer and of communion with God.

The three cardinal principles for which the Synagogue stood were: the absolute unity of God, the observance of and the loyalty to the Torah, and the world-wide Messianic outlook.[166] The real dynamic power, the fashioner and refashioner of Judaism in the various ages and lands, was the Synagogue, the house of public instruction and common prayer.

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[164] Foakes Jackson, Josephus and the Jews, passim.

[165] I Kings 8:27.

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The chief use of the synagogue was for worship, edification, instruction and discipline. It served as a community house and the seat of the spiritual government for the Jewish community. The religious worship greatly influenced the Gentile communities. In its solemnity and simplicity there was a tremendous drawing power, and every one that witnessed these services was very much influenced by them. No image was seen there, to which prayer was directed, but the Spirit of the unseen God made His presence felt everywhere in the Sanctuary.

The worship in the Synagogue, on a Sabbath morning, generally took this form:

(a) Opening Prayer.(People standing, facing toward Jerusalem).
(b) Reading of the Shema (Deut. 6:4).
(c) Reading of the lesson for the day. (Pentateuch was divided into 154 portions to be read in Synagogue during a period of three years.)
(d) Translation into the vernacular. (Generally after the reading of three verses of Scripture.)
(e) Reading of the Prophets.
(f) Practical Discourse.
(g) Benediction.[167]

According to Philo and Josephus, the purpose of the Synagogue was to promote the moral and religious education of the community.[168] It was impossible to frequent the Synagogue without becoming thoroughly familiar with the lofty moral elements contained in the Law and the great ideals of righteousness, mercy, and humility enunciated in the impassioned language of the prophets. It was the Synagogue which achieved this immense result. The Synagogue was the center of the life of the Jewish community, and the central object in the Synagogue was the Torah. The sacrificial rites went with the Temple, and Judaism does not seem to have missed them overmuch either. The sacrifices demanded by God were not material and bloody. The sacrifice He desired was a living sacrifice of consecrated souls.

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[166] Kaufmann Kohler, The Origins of the Synagogue and the Church (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929), pp. 138-145.

[167] W. D. Morrison, The Jews Under Roman Rule, pp. 247-250.

[168] Philo De Vita Mosis. ii. 167; Josephus Contra Opion. ii. 18.

The shifting of the center of worship from the Temple to the Synagogue was a revolutionizing one. It spiritualized the religion and made it conform more closely to the monotheistic and universalistic teaching of the Torah. Was Yahweh the only, universal God? Then He must not be appropriated by one people only, and His worship must not be localized to one place.

Very naturally, therefore, the Synagogue became the center of the proselyte-propaganda.[169] The Synagogue was frequented not only by the Jews, but also by the proselytes, the "God-fearers," and the Gentiles. These non-Jews learned to appreciate the Synagogue so much that they even went to the extent of building Synagogues for the Jews. "For He loves our nation, and He has built us a Synagogue." This testimony was made to Jesus, by the elders of the Jews in reference to a Roman centurion.[170] Wherever Paul went on his missionary journeys, he found Jewish Synagogues and went there to preach the Gospel. Acts mentions Synagogues in Salamis, Antioch (Pisidia) Iconium, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus.[171] In Antioch many Gentiles came to the Synagogue to hear Paul, and it is related that they "besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath."[172] Connected with these Synagogues was a group of proselytes and "God-fearers." The Synagogue worship evidently was very much frequented by the Gentiles, and in this way they learned to appreciate and worship the God of Israel. Some broke completely with their former life and with their relations and became full proselytes; others stopped half-way, and are referred to as "God-fearers." The Jews seem to have welcomed these strangers to their worship. They may even have invited them to attend. It was a common knowledge that the Jews rested on the seventh day.

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[169] Oskar Holtzmann, *Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte*, 2-te Auflage (Tübingen, 1906), pp. 252-55.

[170] Luke 7:3-5.

[171] Acts 13:5,14; 14:1; 17:1 f., 10, 17; 18:4, 19.

[172] Acts 13:43, 44.

All Jewish shops and businesses were closed on the Sabbath, and everybody knew that this was the day for the Jews to worship their God.

In their eagerness to impress the occasional or regular visitor, the Jews naturally laid stress upon making the services as helpful and impressive as possible. The Gentiles intuitively sensed that Judaism was on a higher level than the pagan religions. Religion and sincerity, religion and morality, were equally emphasized in Judaism. The Jews evidently succeeded in making their worship services attractive and satisfying.

But what about the Synagogue itself? What about the Synagogue-art?

Braude has convincingly shown that the impulse to proselyte-propaganda was very strong in Judaism, that the Rabbis were favorably disposed to it, that the Hadrianic and other persecutions did not dampen Jewish aspirations to win Gentiles to the faith of Israel, and that missionary activities continued throughout the so-called Talmudic period.[173] Revolutionary changes were going on in the world at large, and within Judaism itself. The Jewish religion was at stake. Judaism had sustained the most deadly blow during all its history. The Jews had completely lost their independence; their capital was destroyed and their Temple lay in ruin, and there was no hope of getting permission to rebuild it either. New ways had to be found. The Torah and the Synagogue came to take the place of the Temple and the sacrificial rites. Their law needed to be adapted to the new situation. It could not be enforced in its totality. Rival religions were doing active missionary propaganda, with the object of winning the Gentiles to their faith, and some even attempted to win the Jews. Radical changes had to be undertaken and new departures made.

This was nothing new. Judaism was not a static religion. During the Babylonian captivity it assimilated to itself the Persian angelology and demonology, the doctrine of resurrection, much of its eschatology and future world view.[174] The precarious situation in which the Jews found themselves, and the all-pervading Hellenistic culture necessitated a new orientation. The Synagogue took the place of the Temple and the non-sacrificial worship that of the sacrificial. In order to meet the new demands, new Synagogues had to be built and old ones renovated in order to accommodate the increasing number of Gentiles which came there to worship. Derwacter in a very suggestive passage says: "The Synagogue could be and doubtless was often consciously adapted to the needs of the foreigner."[175] Numerous Jewish Synagogues have been excavated during the last quarter of a century, in Palestine and the Diaspora, which conclusively show that the Synagogues could be and were adapted to new circumstances. Was it an adaptation to the needs of the foreigner, or what was it? We refer here to what is known as the Synagogue-art.

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[173] William G. Braude, *Jewish Proselyting in the First Five Centuries of the Common Era* (Providence, R. I.: Brown University, 1940), *passim*.

[174] Franz Cumont, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, p. 38.

This art is found practically everywhere in those places where Jews dwelt and built their Synagogues, in Diaspora as well as in Palestine.[176] The Synagogue-art is both Jewish and non-Jewish. According to the Mosaic law, Israel was prohibited from making "any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in the Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth."[177] There always has been a school in Jewry which constructed it as a prohibition of all such representations. Others pointed out that the intention of the lawgiver was to qualify this verse by the following one, and to prohibit only the worshipping of images, or the making of images for purposes of worship.[178]

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[175] Frederick Milton Derwacter, Preparing the Way for Paul (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1930), p. 96.

[176] "Curiously enough not a single surviving Synagogue belongs to the New Testament period." The reason for this apparent anomaly is naturally that most Synagogues of Palestine were destroyed either in the first or second Jewish revolt, that is, between 66 and 135 A. D.
W. F. Albright, The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1935).

[177] Ex. 20:4; Deut. 5:8.

[178] With respect to the making of images and the attitude toward them, we may distinguish roughly three periods: (a) The period of earlier Israel used images in the Tabernacle, Temple, and palace with very little restriction (I Kgs. 6-7; II Chron. 3-4;) (b) After the return from the Exile, the iconoclastic spirit ruled. No representation of animate life seems to have been allowed; (c) In the late first and early second centuries A. D., a strange change took place. Art was produced all over the

The Jews in their eagerness to secure proselytes reinterpreted old commands in such a way that they would not be an obstacle to their proselytizing. An anonymous Baraita asserts that Boaz had promulgated the Halakic principle, that the exclusion in Deuteronomy 23:3 refers to an Ammonite, but not to an Ammonitess, to a Moabite, but not to a Moabitess. The injunction against the Edomites was ignored, and they were taken in *en masse*.[179] Rabbi Joshua B. Hananiah laid down this significant rule (ca. A. D. 90): Since Sennacherib brought about such a general confusion of races, the two generation requirements for Edomite proselytes could no longer obtain.[180] In the Babylonian Gemara, the question is asked: "Is there not a difference between a village and a city?" Yes, in the village all images are prohibited because they are worshipped there; not so in the city because here they serve as adornments.[181] In reference to the particular parts of images, hands and feet are prohibited because the pagans used to kiss the hands and feet of their idols.[182] The majority of the Scribes attempt to define the proper meaning of the prohibition against images. They arrived at this conclusion: "Only that sculpture (*Bildwerk*) is prohibited in whose hand a scepter, or a bird, or a ball rests" (cf. the eagle in the right hand of Zeus). Rabbi Simeon B. Gamaliel laid down this rule: "All sculptures in whose hands something rests is prohibited."[183]

Goodenough, Rostovtzeff, Sukenik and others have done extremely valuable work in this field by elucidating this intricate problem. Several attempts have been made to get at and behind the real motivation for this unsuspected existence of Synagogue-art. Prophylactics, superstition, even magic have been proposed as a possible motivation. The difficulty here is the frequency

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Roman world, and the Rabbis brought forth new interpretations. Some Rabbis still opposed it, others were dubious. Cf. Father Frey, *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicorum* (E Civitate Vaticana, 1935), *passim*.

[179] Deut. 23:7, 8.

[180] William G. Braude, *Jewish Proselyting in the First Five Centuries of our Era*, pp. 49, 59.

[181] Gemara 41. a; cf. Johannes Leipoldt, *Anti-Semitismus in der Alten Welt* (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1933), p. 22.

[182] Leipoldt, *op. cit.*, p. 22; Mishna 3.2.

[183] *Ibid.*, Mishna 3.1.

of its appearance and its universal geographical distribution in the Roman empire. Were we to accept this explanation, we would have to postulate that practically the whole of Judaism was tainted by it. We do not think that this was the case. Judaism had not deteriorated that far. Other explanations will have to be found.

We agree with Goodenough that this art was used, at least in part, symbolically. But the question remains unanswered, "Why was it so used?" Why did the Jews need to borrow pagan art at all when they had a plethora of their own? We suggest that the introduction of the Synagogue-art was part of the widespread, active missionary propaganda, and that it was employed chiefly to interest and influence the non-Jewish part of the people that frequented the Synagogues.

Every missionary today will tell us that illustrative, pictorial material, especially when drawn by native artists, using native motifs, will draw crowds and hold their interest for hours. It will give the missionary, if present, an opportunity to answer many questions and explain the lessons the pictorial representations are supposed to teach.

We know that art was used by the Mystery Religions for missionary purposes. It was so used by Christianity which so copiously copied Judaism.

In support of our thesis, we propose the following arguments:

(a) The Synagogue-art had its inception and flourished at a time in Jewish history when the Jews felt themselves called upon to make several reorientations; e. g. the translation of their Scripture into Greek, the creation of an apologetic missionary literature, the active proselyte-propaganda, the shifting of emphasis from the Temple and the sacrificial rites to the Synagogue and the non-sacrificial rites, the reinterpretation of their Scripture to suit the demands of the time and allow non-eligible people to come in as proselytes, the attempt to make Judaism a universal religion, et cetera. These were all revolutionary changes and were all connected in some way or other with their missionary endeavors.

(b) The Synagogue-art was employed to make the synagogue more attractive to prospective proselytes and in order to make the transition hoped-for from the old religion to the new easier.

The Synagogue was the chief proselyte recruiting station. More proselytes were won by the Synagogues than by any other method. Herein lay the importance of making the Synagogue attractive to the Gentiles. The motive here was partly to interest, partly to educate.

(c) The Synagogue-art was adopted to compete with other religious groups. An intensified struggle for the souls of men went on in the Graeco-Roman world, the like of which has hardly ever been equaled. All were out to win converts, and the competition was very keen. Methods which had proved their value in one religion were quickly adopted by others. In Dura Europos we find a Jewish Synagogue and a Christian Church within two blocks from one another, both making the fullest use of Church and Synagogue-art in, we hope, a friendly competition.

(d) The Synagogue-art served as an apologetic against the slanderous accusation that the Jews were enemies of culture and had done nothing to further progress. What could more effectively put the lie to such a slander than to employ art, both of their own and of carefully selected pagan, in their synagogues!

(e) The Synagogue-art was contemporaneous with the age of Jewish proselytizing. The excavation of Jewish Synagogue remains, of late years, has unmistakably shown that it was during the active Jewish proselytizing period that the Synagogue-art flourished in the Graeco-Roman world. It is also a remarkable coincidence that simultaneously with the Jews losing their missionary zeal and giving up their proselyte-propaganda, the Synagogue-art disappears almost over night. No more frescoes were made, no new mosaics laid, and the Synagogue-art already in use was chiselled off or destroyed in some other way. How are we to explain this contemporaneousness of coming into being, flourishing, and disappearance of the Synagogue-art and the proselyte-propaganda? Coming into being at the same time, coexisting simultaneously and mysteriously passing away at the same period would seem to furnish us with a strong probability that there actually existed an intimate and a vital relationship between the two.

(f) The Synagogue-art could hardly have won such a general acceptance had it not been motivated by a high and noble purpose. Such a purpose we find in the worthy attempt to bring the Gentiles under the wings of Shekinah. Making Yahweh known and believed and respected and worshipped in the world was an

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undertaking big enough and worthy enough for such a new departure. The missionary propaganda was in itself an innovation not directly enjoined upon the Jews in the Old Testament. But the Jews had come to believe that such a command lay at the very heart of Torah, and that it was an act pleasing to God. New methods had to be found and new ways explored in order to reach their goal.[184]

6. Personal Solicitation

Abraham is represented in Rabbinic lore as the first missionary of the One God. The Rabbis enjoin their hearers to go and do likewise and "make the Lord thy God beloved among all creatures, even as Abraham thy father had done." For it is written: "And the souls which they had made in Haran."[185] This really means: "All the souls they had acquired in Harán."[186] This, in other words, means that Abraham converted them and brought them to rest under the wings of Shekinah. Hence, it may be known, that every one that brings a single soul beneath the wings of the Shekinah is considered as though he had created and fashioned this soul.[187]

Abraham is still held to be the father of proselytes. Abraham was responsible for the male converts and Sarah for the female proselytes. Our father Abraham caused God's name to be invoked by all who passed by his home. How did he do it? He gave the wayfarers food and drink, and when they arose to thank him, he said: "Nay, you have partaken of God's gift. Give thanks to Him, praise and bless Him, who spake and the world was."[188]

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[184] The Zodiac is regularly represented in Mithraism. We find it upon the walls of the Mithraeums and in sculptures used for adornment. The Seasons were adopted by Mithraism and personified and were closely related to the four winds. The Zodiacs and the personified seasons came into use in Mithraism in Asia Minor. These Mithraic signs were taken over by the Jews in their Synagogue-art. They are found in Mosaic floors in several Synagogues, probably best preserved in the Beth Alpha Synagogue. We have no indication that the Zodiacs and the Seasons were worshipped in Mithraism.

W. H. Roscher, Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie, p. 1897.

Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen, p. 149.

Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 38.

[185] Gen. 12:5.

[186] William G. Braude, Jewish Proselyting in the First Five Centuries, p. 27.

[187] Canticles Rabbah on 1:3.

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Moses is said to have made a proselyte of his father-in-law. He plead with him, saying: "Come with us and we will deal kindly with you"for God told Israel to deal kindly with proselytes.[189] The Rabbis set before their hearers examples of proselyting by their revered men of old. This was done with a purpose, namely to inspire the same zeal in their hearers that they might go out and do as Abraham and Moses did. Braude says: "*Yeshibat* or seminaries may have been founded in the larger centers not only to spread learning in Israel but also to propagate principles of Judaism amongst the Gentiles."[190] Orally and by pen the Israelites were educated to do personal work for their God amongst the Gentiles.

The personal solicitation done by three men to win the royal house of Adiabene is a classical example and highly instructive. A Jewish merchant by the name of Ananias traded with the princesses of the court with such success that he converted them to the Jewish faith. He must have been highly respected and given special privileges, being thus allowed freely to converse with the royal princesses in the palace. Ananias finally won the Prince Izates. A traveling Jew by the name of Eleazar came from Galilee. He led Izates to accept the law fully and be circumcised. Izates' mother, Queen Helena, through the influence of a third proselytizer, was also won over and became a devoted follower of Judaism.[191] Friedländer is certain that Ananias was a Diaspora Jew and that Eleazar was a Pharisee.[192] Ananias does not urge Izates to be circumcised. Even when Izates himself suggests it, Ananias is somewhat fearful of the consequences. Ananias tries to persuade him that such a step was not necessary, that he could serve God without being circumcised. Sincere worship is the essential thing. Ananias re-echoes Paul's words:

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[188] *Talmud Babli, tractati sota*, 10 b; cf. Gerald Friedlander, *Rabbinic Philosophy and Ethics* (London: P. Vallentine and Sons, 1912), p. 58.

[189] *Pseudo-Jonathan on Numbers* 10:29.

[190] William G. Braude, *Jewish Proselyting*, etc., p. 18.

[191] Josephus *Ant*. 20:2, 3, 5; 4:3.

[192] Friedländer, *Die Religiösen Bewegungen innerhalf des Judentums im Zeitalter Jesu*, 1905, p. 33.

"Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but the important thing is the keeping of the commandments of God."[193] To Eleazar circumcision was essential to true conversion; he was of the legalistic type. Here we have the two forms of proselyting in Judaism, analogous to what we find in early Christianity. Both types seem to have been equally in earnest and scored considerable success. It is difficult to say how far Eleazar represented the Palestinian viewpoint, and Ananias the Diaspora. It is more likely that these types were represented both in Diaspora and in Palestine.

We have already referred to the fact that Abraham is said to have won proselytes by deeds of hospitality and kindness. In the book of Tobit we have mention of a second tithe paid "unto orphans and the widows and the proselytes who attached themselves to the children of Israel."[194] By persuasive words, kind deeds, and righteous living, the Jews sought to convert the Gentiles to the God of Israel.

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[193] I Cor. 7:19.

[194] Tobit 1:8.

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CHAPTER VII

CHRISTIANITY

The Expansion of Christianity in the Roman Empire

Christianity was the last of the Oriental religions to enter the Roman Empire as a missionary religion. Mithraism had for a long time been at home in the Asiatic part of the Roman Empire when Christianity emerged upon the scene. In the European part of the Empire Mithraism may have arrived contemporaneously or later than Christianity. But looking at the Empire as a whole, the fact remains that Christianity was the last to enter the field as a competitor for the souls of men. Generally speaking, this was a disadvantage as it had given the earlier religions time to establish themselves and to fortify themselves in the strongholds already won. To be a late-comer may also have had some advantages: Oriental religions were no longer a strange phenomenon. They were known to the people and tolerated by the government. The mistakes made by the earlier religions in their missionary propaganda did not need to be repeated. Missionary methods, which had stood the test and proven their value, were at the disposal of the late-comer, for adoption or rejection, as need might be. It was in the fullness of time Christianity emerged. Politically, socially, and religiously the soil was well prepared. The Mediterranean world was united under one ruler, devastating wars had ceased, and there was peace on earth and good will among men. Communications were at their best, and every part of the empire was accessible. A common, popular language was widely understood everywhere. There was a deep-seated religious longing in the hearts of men for a religion that would satisfy and for a knowledge of the true God and for communion with him. Man was aware of his own impotency in washing away the stains of impurity and sin and his inability to lead a higher life. He felt the need of a religion that could lift him out of his quandary. The Savior-religions offered a solution. What man could not do, the Redeemer could. Were these religions satisfactory? Did they deliver the goods? One after the other was put to the test. People were initiated in several of these religions, hoping in this way finally to find what they were seeking for. Some gave up the search, thinking there was nothing more to be found in religion; others became despondent, even cynical.

At this time Christianity came upon the scene and accepted the challenge. And with Caesar it could say: "Veni, vidi, vici." The story of Christianity, from its inception until its final triumph, in the Roman Empire is, indeed, a very fascinating one. There were days of despair, when the very existence of Christianity seemed to hang in the balance, but there were also days of exultation and victory. Christianity weathered every storm and grew stronger after every testing until one day it found itself tolerated, then favored, and finally exalted above every other competitor to be the state religion of the mighty Roman Empire.

Christianity was cradled within Judaism. Jesus himself was a Jew, so were all his disciples, and the first missionaries. Jesus never broke with Judaism. Like the Old Testament prophets he sought to rejuvenate it from within. He came in conflict with the Jewish leaders. His picture of God, as the all-loving-father, without favoritism, of man's need of a higher righteousness, of God's forgiving grace to the sinner who repents, his rebuke of hypocricy and self-righteousness, his insistence on love, humanity, and repentence rather than on ritualism and form, and last but not least, his claim to be sent by God as a special messenger to his people and to have an intimate knowledge of God as his Father, did not meet with the approval of the leaders of Judaism. They plotted against him and accused him before the Roman governor, who had him crucified as "the king of the Jews."

Jesus had gathered around him a number of followers who expected him to be the Messiah. The crucifixion came to them as a terrible blow. They were stunned, frightened, and dispersed. Some of them even lost hope, thinking all was over. "We hoped it was he, who should redeem Israel."[1] Others still clung to a forlorn hope that somehow or in some way God was going to intervene, and that all would come out right in the end.

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[1] Luke 24:21.

Then, according to our sources, something happened on Easter morning which entirely changed the whole outlook and made of the saddened, affrighted, and despondent followers of Jesus hopeful, courageous, and rejoicing men and women. They became firmly convinced that their Master was alive, that he had been raised from the dead. One after the other of his disciples had an experience of him.

> He appeared to his disciples and was seen alive by them. First to Peter, then to the Twelve, then to more than five hundred brethren at one time, afterwards to James, and later to all the apostles.[2]

This is the record of the oldest and most certain tradition preserved for us by Paul. They saw him. He spoke words of comfort to them. They had no longer any doubt that Jesus, whom they had followed in Galilee, and who had been crucified under Pontius Pilate, was risen from the dead. Nothing could swerve them away from this faith, neither threat, nor torture, nor scourging, yes even death itself could not make them refrain from testifying of his resurrection.

Then again, they had another indelible experience upon the Mount of Olives, when they saw their Master in visible form ascend to heaven. Their message from now on got a new content. The crucified Savior was not only risen from the dead, the conqueror of death itself, but he had ascended to heaven and was now sitting on the right hand of the Father. He was now the heavenly Christ, and all power in heaven and on earth had been given to him.

This was good news, it was the "Gospel," and they felt themselves compelled to share it with others. They told their story to those who would listen, and those who heard it repeated it to others, and so on, ad infinitum. It was in this way the Christian missionary movement started. It was a natural outflow of the infinite joy, their risen Lord and Savior had brought them. There was no elaborate organization. It just came spontaneously and irresistibly. Many had known Jesus during his earthly ministry. They remembered his many deeds of mercy and his mighty words. The whole thing was so inexplicable, and it so impressed them, that all their resistance was gone, and they believed, too, and joined the little group of believers.

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[2] I Cor. 15:5-7.

Among the apostles Peter and John assumed the leadership immediately after the resurrection experiences. But the leadership in the Jerusalem church was willingly accorded to James, the brother of the Lord. After James' death a cousin of Jesus was chosen to be his successor, and even at a later date blood-relations of Jesus enjoyed special regard in the church.[3] James and Peter and John constituted the "pillars," as Paul once called them, of the primitive church.

In our study of the missionary methods of Judaism we noticed two types of Judaism, the Palestinian and the Diaspora, the latter generally called Hellenistic Judaism. Speaking generally, Hellenistic Judaism was the more liberal and inclusive, while the Palestinian Judaism was more legal and exclusive. Many Hellenistic Jews lived in Palestine and came very early in contact with the Christian movement. Many Hellenistic Jews must have heard and seen Jesus at some time or other at the Jewish festivals at Jerusalem.

In the Christian movement we have likewise two outstanding types of Christianity: the Jewish type and the Hellenistic type. Hellenistic Christianity may be traced back to Jerusalem,[4] but it early developed an important center at Antioch. It differed from Jewish Christianity chiefly by not being a Jewish sect. It quickly cast aside enough of its Jewish swaddling-clothes to become a universal religion, not confined to Judaism. Part of Stephen's speech, in some aspects, seems to have come from a more radical universalism than Paulinism itself. It antedated Paul, though he later advanced to be its foremost leader. It broke with Jewish ritualism and received members into fellowship without first becoming Jews.

Both Jewish and Hellenistic Christianity had very much in common. Both regarded Jesus as authoritative and believed in him as risen Lord, and looked for his early return. Both valued as standard ethical principles inherited from Jesus and Judaism. Both observed certain rites, especially baptism and the Lord's Supper. At first these two types of Christianity lived together in one community, or church, without any serious schism. But one soon developed. This is how it happened: "The Grecian Jews mur-

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[3] Hegesippus in Eusebius, Historia Ecclesiastica. iii. 11; 20: 1-6; 32:6.

[4] Acts 6:6, 11-13.

mured against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in their daily ministrations."[5] There seems to have been a tendency in the first church to regard the Hellenistic Jews as of somewhat lower grade. But such an attitude they successfully resisted. The schism was amicably settled by the apostles. To care for their interest the Hellenistic Christians chose their own council of seven, whose members significantly all had Greek names and one of them was a proselyte from Antioch. Two of these seven figured prominently in the future development of Hellenistic Christianity. Stephen, "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit,"[6] eloquent in speech and mighty in words, made a speech before the members of the Council at Jerusalem, which so angered them that they rushed Stephen out of the city and had him stoned for blasphemy. A persecution immediately broke out against the Hellenistic Christians and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria. The Jewish Christian group does not seem to have been affected at all, and the apostles stayed on in Jerusalem.[7] Of those who were obliged to leave Jerusalem was also Philip, one of the seven, and closely associated with Stephen. Philip made quite a missionary tour. First he went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed unto them the Christ.[8] From there he was sent on a desert mission and caught up on the way with an Ethiopian eunuch, returning to his homeland from Jerusalem where he had gone to worship. He explained to the eunuch a passage from the prophet Isaiah, which he had been reading, and "preached unto him Jesus," with the result that the eunuch believed, was baptized, and "went on his way rejoicing."[9] Philip continued his missionary tour on the Mediterranean plain and finally settled down at Caesarea.[10]

Some of those, "that were scattered abroad on account of the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none but Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spoke unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus."[11] A great number believed and turned unto the Lord. This was the beginning of foreign missionary work, probably the greatest movement ever inaugurated, on a planetary scale. We can only guess at who these men were. They are anonymous and will most likely remain so forever. "Lucius of Cyrene," one of the prophets and teachers who were at Antioch, may have been one of these enterprising and enthusiastic men.[12]

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[5] Acts 6:1-6.
[6] Acts 6:6.
[7] Acts 7-8:1.
[8] Acts 8:5.
[9] Acts 8:26-39.
[10] Acts 8:40.
[11] Acts 11:19,20.

From the very beginning the original church was a missionary church, for by preaching about her Lord, she gained subjects for the kingdom of God.[13] All the four Gospels, as they have come down to us, agree in ascribing the missionary impulse to Jesus. Both Mark and Matthew allude to the Gospel in the future being preached throughout the world: "The Gospel must first be preached unto all the nations,"[14] and in the story of the anointing at Bethany: "Wherever this Gospel shall be preached, throughout the whole world, what this woman has done shall be also told in memory of her."[15] Luke has throughout a universal interest. He refers to the little babe Jesus as "a light for revelation to the Gentiles."[16] He traces the genealogy of Jesus back to Adam.[17] He refers to the times of the Gentiles being fulfilled.[18] All the Synoptists make the risen Jesus issue the command to preach the gospel to all nations.[19]

The Fourth Gospel is saturated with statements of a directly universalistic character. Jesus is the "Savior of the world," and "God so loved the world," that he sent him.[20] "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."[21] There are many other similar statements in this Gospel, but probably no one is more significant than that this Gospel makes Greeks ask after Jesus. This request causes Jesus to reply, that the hour has come for him to die and be glorified and lifted up. And then he concludes by saying: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto myself."[22]

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[12] Acts 13:1.

[13] Hans Lietzmann, The Beginnings of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), I, 90.

[14] Mark 13:10; Matt. 24:14.

[15] Mark 14:9; Matt. 26:13.

[16] Luke 2:32. [17] Luke 3:23 f. [18] Luke 21:24.

[19] Matt. 28:19 f; Mark 16:15 f; Luke 24:47.

[20] John 4:42; 3:16. [21] John 10:16.

When Jesus sent out his disciples on missionary tours in Palestine, he charged them, saying: Go not into any way of the Gentiles."[23] But the Gospels leave us in no doubt that Jesus envisaged a future break with Judaism. The Jewish leaders had already rejected his teachings and his claims. With the Jews, Jesus shared the conviction that the Gentiles would some day turn to the Lord. The prophets had spoken of the future day, when all nations would come to Zion to worship Yahweh. It was but natural that the thoughts and the anticipations of Jesus should run in the same direction. The Jews were engaged in an intense proselyte-propaganda, and it is quite conceivable that Jesus in his later ministry visualized a future, world-wide Gentile mission in resemblance to the Jewish propaganda.

It is evident, however, that Jesus took a keen interest in the Gentiles, and that he spoke of the Gospel being preached throughout the world. It is also clear that the disciples of Jesus, and their immediate followers, believed and were persuaded that Jesus had commissioned them to go and preach the Gospel to all the nations, and that it was in obedience to his command that they went everywhere preaching the good news. The consciousness of a divine call was needed before the Jews were willing to undertake an extensive proselyte-propaganda. It was not otherwise in the original Christian church.

We have already seen that it was the Hellenistic Jews who first undertook missionary work among the Samaritans and among the Gentiles. This was before Paul came on the scene at all. He was not the founder of the Gentile mission, but he was the one who furthered it most, once started, and who first saw that the future of Christianity lay in the West. He also foresaw, that in order to make Christianity a universal religion, it was necessary to free it from the Jewish swaddling clothes. Paul was by no means willing to part with everything that came from Judaism, but he insisted that the central thing in Christianity was Christ, and the Cross of Christ. Believe in Christ, and you are saved. Circumcision, dietary laws, and ritualistic ordinances are not necessary to salvation and may in certain cases even be a hindrance to it.

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[22] John 12:20-32. [23] Matt. 10:5.

This caused a rift within the original Christian church, as many of the Jewish Christians could not agree with Paul, and those who saw eye to eye with him. Within the group of Christian leaders themselves the opinion was divided. But as long as Paul and James lived and were able to exert their tremendous influence a formal break was avoided. It was after these leaders had succumbed to persecution and been killed--Paul in Rome, James in Jerusalem--that a complete split came. The High Priest, Chananiah ben Chananiah dragged James before the high court in the year 62, and had him condemned to death by stoning, obviously on account of religious wrong-doing.[24] The murder of James, not only caused a definite rift between the Jewish Christian legal group and the Hellenistic group, but it was also the cause which led to the final break with Judaism. The condemnation of James was disapproved of sharply by eminent members of the Pharisaic party. It nevertheless brought the church to the definite decision to leave Jerusalem.[25] In addition there was a growing unrest in the country, and the Jewish nationalists believed that their day had come; therefore the original church left the city and migrated to Pella, a Gentile city in Transjordania, opposite Samaria.

The Jewish Christians did not take part in the revolt against Rome or in the defense of Jerusalem. They expected Jesus to return from heaven and assume his Messianic rule. Revolt availed nothing. Consequently they did not sympathize with the Jewish nationalistic leaders. The Jewish Christians lived on in Transjordania and east and south of the Dead Sea for some time, despised by the Jews and looked upon by the growing wing of the Hellenistic Christian church as heretics, when they were not altogether ignored. They are said to have been in possession of a Hebrew Gospel of Matthew. Jerome copied their Gospel and, according to him, there was a copy of it in the library at Caesarea.[26] Irenaeus refers to them as Ebionites, which is a Biblical Hebrew expression for the "poor." He was aware that they denied the virgin birth of Jesus, used only Matthew's Gospel, and would have nothing to do with the apostle Paul.[27] Epiphanius, the historian of the heretics, in the second half of the fourth century, is the last one to mention the Ebionites. From then onwards, they disappear from history.

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[24] Jos. Ant. 20. 200; Eus. ii. 23:4-18.

[25] Hans Lietzmann, op. cit., I, 236.

[26] Jerome Vir. inl.2:3, dial adv. Pelag. 3:2.

[27] Irenaeus i. 26. 2.

One cannot but ask: Would this have been the end of Christianity, had it not been Hellenized and universalized by such Hellenistic Christian leaders as Paul and others? Legal Judaism strangled Hellenistic Judaism; it did the same to the Judaizing branch of Christianity. The existence of Christianity today is due to the clearsighted Christian statesmen who liberated it from its Jewish swaddling clothes. These served Christianity well during its infancy, but it had outgrown them by this time, and they had now become a hindrance to growth.

Christianity was the recipient of a great inheritance from Judaism. Jewish apologetics for monotheism and against idolatry was ready for use. Instructions for catechumens needed only a very slight adaptation. The Old Testament had been translated into Greek, and it became the earliest Bible of the Christians. Jewish synagogues served as a pattern for Christian churches, in regard to organization and divine services. Many of the earliest converts to Christianity had received their first impressions in the synagogues. Missionary methods, used so successfully by Judaism, were adopted by Christianity. Judaism rejected Christianity, but it did not send it away empty-handed.

When Christianity and Judaism met out on the mission fields, friction could hardly be avoided. It is understandable that Judaism resented Christian preachers coming in and snatching away the fruit of its labor, or part of it. Christianity, on the other hand, resented the attitude the Jews took to their crucified Lord, and the harsh words said against him. The fact is that they were so much alike that the very likeness irritated. And still, in spite of this, they were quite distinct. The one was not a copy of the other. In a pagan world there was room for them both. It is to be regretted that Judaism gave up its missionary propaganda and left the field entirely to Christianity, retiring within its own shell and building up around itself a strong wall of defense.

Before the destruction of Jerusalem, in 70 A. D., Christianity spread rapidly in Palestine. As this was "home missionary work," the Jewish Christians took an active part in it. "Churches in Judea" are mentioned by Paul.[28] In Acts we hear of churches on the seaboard, in Galilee, and in Samaria. Others were to be found in Lydda and on the Plain of Sharon, to the north, as well as in the coastal towns of Ashdod, Joppa, and Caesarea. The refugee, Hellenistic Christians from Jerusalem took an active part in the missionary movement within Palestine and carried it over the border to Phoenicia, Damascus, Antioch, et cetera. In Palestine the followers of the teachings of Jesus were called "Nazarenes."[29]

It was first after Christianity had definitely moved out upon Gentile soil that the followers of Jesus became known as "Christians." This happened at Antioch. The name was given to them by those outside the movement, as a nickname, most likely by the Gentiles.[30] It did take some time before the Christians began to use this name in styling themselves. Paul generally employs three characteristic titles: "the saints," "brethren," and "the church of God." Christianity originally spoke Aramaic. It soon began to speak Greek and Latin and Syriac and Armenian. Today it speaks over one thousand languages and dialects.

The wars of revolt naturally hampered the missionary work in Palestine; and after the revolt of Barcochba, 135 A. D., the emperor Hadrian built on the site of Jerusalem, the Roman colony of Aelia Capitolina, which Jews were forbidden to enter under penalty of death.[31] The Christian movement continued to grow strong in Jerusalem, but it was no longer a Jewish Christianity, among the Jews, as they were excluded from that place, but it was a work entirely among the Greek and Latin speaking inhabitants. At the council of Nicaea, there were present the following Palestinian bishops: Jerusalem, Neapolis, Sebaste, Caesarea, Gadara, Ascalon, Nicopolis, Jamnia, Eleutheropolis, Maximiniapolis, Jericho, Sebulon, Lydda, Azotos, Scythopolis, Gaza, Aila, and Capitolias.[32]

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[28] Gal. 1:22; I Thess. 2:14. [29] Acts 24:5.

[30] Acts 11:26. The Jews would hardly have called them a name equivalent to Messianists. This name was sacred to them and they still expected Messiah to come.

[31] Hans Lietzmann, op. cit., I, 241.

[32] Adolf Harnack, The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1905), II, 259.

After the fall of Jerusalem, Antioch in Syria, Ephesus, Rome, and Alexandria became centers of the Christian movement. It was from Antioch that Barnabas and Saul and Paul and Silas set out on their missionary journeys to the west, and thither they returned to give report. The first missionary journey brought Paul and Barnabas to Cyprus and to Antioch in Pisidia, to Iconium, to Lystra, and Derbe, to the very center of Asia Minor.

Paul is the outstanding missionary to the Gentiles during the Apostolic Age, and the one who more than anybody else was instrumental in giving Christianity the content and form it took. He was born in Tarsus, Cilicia, of Jewish parents, and brought up as a strict Pharisee. Originally, he was a zealous, almost rabid, opposer of Christianity and of him, whom he later styled the "foundation" of Christianity, Jesus Christ.[33] "Beyond measure" he persecuted the Church of God and wasted it.[34] But after a marvellous religious experience his attitude was completely reversed, and he began to preach Christ instead of persecuting him. Christ revealed himself to Paul, or as he himself describes it, "he was seen of me also."[35]

We know more of Paul and of his missionary labor than of any other of the apostolic missionaries. In his epistles he reveals himself to a higher degree than any other New Testament writer; and more than half of the Acts deal with him and his labor. Peter is the only one of the Apostles referred to in the New Testament as being outside of Palestine, evidently on missionary tours. He is mentioned in connection with Paul at Antioch, and he may have visited Corinth, too.[36] Paul refers to Peter as the apostle entrusted with the mission to the Jews.[37]

Where the other apostles labored for their Master, we do not know with certainty, as the records referring to their sphere of labor are of a legendary nature. We may be assured that they used their time and energy to the best of their understanding, and that Paul was not the only missionary-statesman among these earlier pioneers. They laid their plans with the same care as Paul, and chose their field of labor with a view to the strategical importance of the field as a future missionary center, just as Paul did.

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[33] I Cor. 3:11. There has been some disagreement as to whether Jesus or Paul was the real founder of Christianity, but there can be no doubt as to who was the foundation--we may put it this way. The foundation is Jesus Christ, Paul is the chief architect, the organizer, the builder, who built the Christian structure upon this foundation.

[34] Gal. 1:13. [35] I Cor. 15:8.

[36] Gal. 2:11; I Cor. 1:12; 3:22.

[37] Gal. 2:7.

Quite early we hear of Alexandrian Christianity. But as to who preached the good news at Alexandria, we know nothing at all. From there came the great preacher and orator Apollos to Ephesus. It is not quite clear what type of Christianity he represented. He knew only of the baptism of John, but he mightily convinced the Jews, showing by the Scripture, publicly, that Jesus was the Christ.[38] Paul wrote to the Romans that his missionary policy was to preach the gospel where the name of Christ was not known before.[39] Why did Paul not go to a strategical center like Alexandria, as he was wont to do? It may be a fair deduction to make, that it was because somebody else had already preached Christ there. Who was it? Was it any of the apostles, or was it Mark, as a tradition would have us believe? The Church of Rome was of such importance that Paul took time off from his many other duties to write his longest and most important Epistle to that church. He had never been there before. The Church was already in existence. Who had preached the Gospel in Rome and founded that Church? We are ignorant of this too. Lietzmann makes as good a guess as any, saying, that it was "possibly founded by Antiochene delegates."[40] We know that there were Christian churches to the south, the east, and the north of Palestine, but Acts tells us nothing about it. Had some biographer taken upon himself to write the exploits of the missionaries who went to other climes and lands than Paul, we would unquestionably have had just as challenging a report of heroic deeds as we have in the Acts of the New Testament.

Paul's field of labor was Asia Minor and Greece and Rome. He nourished plans to go to Spain. His wish may have been realized or it may not. He was always on the lookout for new fields, new provinces, new countries to conquer for Christ. "I am a debtor," says he, "both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise."[41] His missionary labors enormously influenced the future of Christianity and the history of the world. He died as a martyr for the faith which he had so faithfully and with such remarkable success promulgated in the near East and in the West.

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[38] Acts 18:24-28. [39] Rom. 15:20.

[40] Hans Lietzmann, op. cit., I, 144.

It would take us too far afield to trace in detail the expansion of the Christian Church in the Orient and in the Occident. When Paul and other Christian leaders had gone to their reward, God raised up other Christian leaders to cope with new situations and new problems. Difficulties arose with the Imperial Government of Rome, especially in regard to Emperor worship. The Christians considered it disloyal to their Lord and their God to burn incense to the genius of any man and confess: "Caesar is Lord." The Roman government saw in this refusal a sign of disloyalty, bordering on treason. So arose persecutions and Christian martyrs. Dogmatical questions caused difficulties, and heresies arose. Pagan writers attacked Christian teachings, and the behavior of the Christians. Apologists came to the front, defending the Christians against the accusation of Atheism, cannibalism, sexual immorality, disloyalty to the State, intolerance, et cetera. Great literary activities flourished in the last half of the first century and in the first half of the second century, and our present New Testament came into being, i. e., it was written at that time. Some New Testament books were accepted as canonical, on par with the Old Testament, almost from their publication; others were "disputed" at first and finally accepted; other books were almost unanimously "rejected." The Old Testament continued to hold its own in spite of the mass of Christian writings.

Some Christian leaders, like Marcion and others, advocated the use of Christian writings only. The Mosaic law, as statutory law, had lost its force over the Christians. Sacrifices were no longer needed, since Christ had offered himself as a perfect sacrifice once for all. The ceremonial law was no longer binding. It was only a drag. Why not discard it altogether? Others explained the Old Testament allegorically and claimed that it gave the proper background to the New Testament. Without the Old, the New was, as it were, hanging in the air. Furthermore, it was claimed that the New lay imbedded in the Old, and that the Old was explained in the New.

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[41] Rom. 1:14.

There were many other religions in the Roman Empire, all of them tolerated, and some favored by the government. Judaism was looked upon as a racial religion, and as such it had been exempted from that which was most objectionable to the Christians, Emperor worship. Christians sought for a similar exemption, but as theirs was not a racial, religious group, and they received adherents from all races and every social strata of society, the government refused to grant them exemption. The polytheistic religions had no difficulty with Emperor worship. One more god to them meant no disloyalty to their former divinities. Not so with Christianity. For this reason Christianity came in for more persecution than any other religion. Other religions had been persecuted for a short period, and then it stopped while threat of persecution hung over the Christians like a Damocles' sword for longer periods, and in some parts of the empire almost continually. It did not always come to torture, imprisonment or death, but the Christians were imposed upon, ridiculed, and ill-treated in many ways. At times it looked like Christianity was going to be rooted up altogether. This was especially the case during the latter half of the third century and the first years of the fourth century. Mithraism, as the religion of the camps, enjoyed practically the status of state-religion. Christianity, its strongest competitor, was being persecuted worse than ever. Churches were confiscated or destroyed. Christians were given the choice between sacrifice to the emperor or take the consequences. Then as suddenly as it was unexpected, came the edict of Milan in the year 313, granting toleration to the Christians, allowing conversions to Christianity, and restoration of church property lost during the persecutions.

The remarkable success of the Christian Church in the Roman Empire reads almost like a novel. Christianity had lived down the accusations hurled against it one by one. Christians were accused of being enemies of the state, but they never rebelled; they were accused of being enemies of mankind, and still they were willing to suffer ill-treatment and outrages without seeking revenge; they were accused of being atheists, but they proved so loyal to their God that not even cruel death could make them disloyal to him.

At the opening of the fourth century A. D., when Constantine issued his memorable edict of toleration, Christians were still a minority group, although in some parts of the empire they constituted a very strong majority. In Pontus, certain parts of North Africa, Armenia, and Edessa, mass movements into the church had taken place. In Armenia and at Edessa Christianity was elevated to be the state religion. Armenia was the first country to do so, followed in quick succession by Edessa.[42]

In the province of Asia, our modern Asia Minor, with the exception of some out-of-the-way districts, Christianity constituted nearly half of the population. In Phrygia, Bithynia, and Pontus there were districts which by this time were practically all Christian. There were also towns and villages which contained few or no pagans at all.[43]

Gregory Thaumaturgos achieved such marvellous results in Pontus that practically the whole population became Christian. Armenia officially was a Christian country by this time. The great missionary of Armenia was Gregory the Illuminator. The Armenians had recently liberated themselves from the Persian yoke. Gregory coöperated with the king, and Christianity was set up in opposition to the Persian worship. The country was vigorously and systematically being Christianized. The city of Edessa was, according to Eusebius, entirely Christian.[44] Edessa became the missionary center of national Syrian Christianity during the third century.

At Antioch, in Coele-Syria and Cyprus, at Alexandria, with Egypt and Thebais, and Rome, in Lower and Middle Italy, in North Africa, Spain, and Greece, Christianity formed a very material portion of the population. It had already influenced the leading classes and the general culture of the people, and it was strong enough in holding its own with other religions.

In some parts of the Roman Empire Christianity was only sparsely represented. These parts included: the Northern districts of Middle Italy, the interior of Achaia, Macedonia,

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[42] Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of the Expansion of Christianity (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), I, 88, 90, 92, 102, 105.

[43] Adolf Harnack, The Expansion of Christianity (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1905), II, 457.

[44] Ibid., p. 458.

Thessaly, Epirus, Dalmatia, Phenicia, Palestine, Mauretania, and Tripolitana. Caesarea in Palestine had a considerable number of Christians, and some minor towns within this category were almost purely Christian localities.[45]

At the inception of the fourth century, parts of the Empire were still a practically untouched missionary field. These were: Belgica, Germany, Middle and Upper Gaul, Upper Italy, the north and northwest coasts of the Black Sea. Some regions outside the Empire fall into this category, e. g., Persia, India, Scythia, et cetera.

Less than three hundred years after the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate had Jesus crucified as "the king of the Jews," the Roman Empire as a whole elevated the religion of Jesus as the religion of the State, and the Emperor himself worshipped in his name, whom one of the Roman governors, in an outlying dependency, condemned to be nailed to a cross, like a common rebel and malefactor. How did this come about? What powers were at work; and what methods were used?

Missionary Methods of Early Christianity

Christianity in entering the Graeco-Roman world as a missionary religion came into a world religiously more alive than it had ever been before. Emperor Augustus made an honest attempt to revivify the old Roman state-religion, with what success we are not sure. But we know every other religion in the Empire was alive to its opportunities, in a world where religious interests had been aroused to the highest pitch. When Christianity stepped upon the scene, the other religions were by no means decadent or ready to die of senility, or over age. Most of the religions were young and enthusiastic, and there was no lack of interest in things religious among the populace. It is well for us to bear in mind from the beginning that Christianity entered into competition with the strongest religions of the time, and at a time when they were at their best and their strongest.

The Graeco-Roman world has sometimes been described as religiously decadent, and as having come to such a stage of dissolution that all Christianity had to do was to stretch out its hand and the Roman World would fall like a ripe fruit into it. Nothing of the kind. To be sure, the satirists were not altogether wrong in giving us such a dark picture of their times. They could undoubtedly have given us both chapters and verse, as their authority, in every case. But they were not giving us a true description, but a caricature of their times. The religions in the Graeco-Roman world were active missionary religions, and were very much alive. Christianity had to take up the struggle in earnest and fight for every inch of ground it gained. The enemy was well entrenched and was numerically much the stronger. We are doing Christianity little honor by picturing Roman paganism as weak, decadent and senile, ready to ask for an armistice almost at once, when the facts are that Christianity met with a strong and unified onslaught from strong enemies and conquered them all.

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[45] Adolf Harnack, op. cit., pp. 240-468, passim.

There is still another matter we do well to bear in mind. Christianity was no racial or national religion. All the mystery religions and Judaism started with a nucleus of their own nationals. They gained their strength and their initial success in this way. Christianity, on the other hand, was without such support, except for a very short time and in a limited number of places. The first missionaries of the Christian religion were of Jewish descent and upbringing. We know that Paul and his companions attempted to start their missionary work in connection with the synagogues, only to be spurned and driven out. Judaism resisted vigorously, even Hellenistic Judaism, the attempt of another bird to come in and nestle in their synagogues. They drove the Christian apostles away. Christianity had to start with no national or racial unit as a nucleus. Christianity was almost from the beginning an international religion, seeking converts from among all sorts and conditions of men. There seemed to be some room for a racial religion, especially if it sought to win the allegiance of their own race, but for an international religion there was hardly any room at all. Christianity was looked upon as an intruder by the other religions, especially when it sought and found converts within the established religions.

Christianity, like Judaism, laid claim to be the only true religion and refused to recognize the idolatrous practices of pagan religions. Mystery religions coöperated sometimes with one another, but there could be no coöperation between the true and the false, between light and darkness. Christianity refused to compromise. At the initial start Christianity was very much at a disadvantage. Later on, when it also refused to partake in the emperor worship, it came in sharp conflict with the state and had to suffer prolonged and bitter persecution. But all worked out for the good of Christianity. The very disadvantages met with at first turned out in the end to be real advantages and helped bring in the final triumph.

The missionary methods of Christianity may be conveniently grouped under these headings: (I) What had Christianity to offer to the world, that is, its attractive features? (II) What missionary agencies did Christianity employ? (III) What sample-proof of its excellency did Christianity produce?

I. Attractive Features

(1) Christianity had a unique Savior to offer to the world. There was in the Graeco-Roman world a real demand for consolation, purity, expiation, and salvation. No other gods than Savior-gods could satisfy this demand. Augustus had delivered Rome from its enemies, and he was hailed as Σωτηρ (Savior). Some of the healing gods were also looked upon as Saviors from bodily sicknesses. Man had an inner, deep-seated desire for communion with God. But he instinctively felt that he was not in a proper condition to have communion with God. He was of impure heart and thoughts. His past was soiled, and he despaired of the present and the future. He felt himself so entirely helpless, that only a god could lift him out of the quagmire into which he had sunk.

The mystery religions offered their savior-gods to such needy ones, with various results. They were cults of redemption. Into this milieu came Christianity and offered to the world a new Savior-god. Christianity was not only another redemption cult. It was above all a cult of the Redeemer. In the mystery religions initiation was the essential thing; in Christianity it was the Redeemer himself. In the mysteries a priest who knew the mysteries was absolutely necessary to the initiation. In Christianity the redeeming act was performed by Christ himself. The priest or teacher had its place in Christianity, too, in the preliminary stage, to introduce the sinner to the Savior, but in the final and the most important act Christ and the sinner had to be alone.

Jesus Christ was not only a wonderful Savior, He was also a perfect Savior, and a blameless and pure historical figure, who had recently lived upon this earth, been crucified, and raised from among the dead. Peter, delivering his speech at Caesarea, is said to have summarized into one sentence the whole of Christ's public ministry, saying: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him."[46] He performed many acts of healing and wonders, and miracles. He had great powers, but he used them entirely in the interest of others and for their benefit. He had for a time a great following, and many were persuaded that he was their expected Messiah. At least at one occasion, they wanted to take him with force and make him king.[47] He did not comply with their wishes because he had no desire to become the type of Messiah they wanted him to be. His desire was to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. He detested all kinds of hypocrisy, pride and self-righteousness. The leaders of the Jewish nation feared his popularity and hated him for his outspoken criticism and for his claims. Finally, they accused him to the Roman governor, who condemned him to be crucified. On the third day he arose again. God raised him up, thereby signifying that Jesus was a just and righteous man. He appeared at intervals to his disciples, and he finally ascended to heaven and sat down on the right hand of God.

It is chiefly through the Epistles of Paul and the Book of Acts that we know how they presented Jesus as the Savior of the nations. They had become fully convinced by his resurrection-appearances that he was the "Savior of the World,"[48] and the Son of God. His death on the cross had a deep significance, as he died the just for the unjust. His death was not accidental. It was foreordained by God and willingly and obediently accepted by Jesus. The messengers of Christ made the death of Christ of cosmic importance. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."[49] The origin of man's salvation was divine love. God so loved the world that he sent, and the Son of God so loved the world that he gave himself.

That a Savior-God died and rose again was nothing strange or unusual in the mystery religions. Some of their Savior-Gods died annually even, and rose again with the changing of the seasons. The doctrine of a dying and rising Savior-God met with no great obstacles in the Hellenistic world. In the Jewish world it was quite different. A crucified Messiah, cursed by God, according to the law, was a stumbling block to the Jews, and as a whole they rejected him.

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[46] Acts 10:38.

[47] John 6:15.

[48] I John 4:14; John 4:42.

[49] John 3:16; Eph. 5:2.

A Savior that loved sinners to such an extent that he sacrificed himself and died for them in order to save them from sins was a thing unheard of in the pagan world. Their Savior-gods had either committed suicide out of sorrow and grief, or been killed out of jealousy by near relatives, or forcefully carried away to the nether world. No one died out of love for a suffering, sinful humanity. All would undoubtedly gladly have escaped death had they been able to do so, or known a better way. The love of Christ, the love of the cross, proved to be the powerful magnet that drew men of every land and every clime, and from every station in life, and from every age, to the crucified and resurrected one, thus fulfilling the prediction of Jesus: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me."[50] Says John: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."[51] Says Paul: "For the love of Christ constrains us, because we judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead."[52] It was such a savior, loving, self-sacrificing, impartial, ever-living, all-embracing, all-powerful, the Christians offered to the world. The earthly Jesus had performed many miracles while he was in "the flesh," and after He had ascended on high and assumed the office of the "Heavenly Christ," he continued to work miracles in his church. The Christian missionaries made much of the Jesus of history, the humble and gentle Jesus, whom every child loved, but they made still more of the Heavenly Christ, who had been given all power in heaven and on earth. Even Paul, who at first seems to have emphasized the "Heavenly Christ" more than the "lowly Jesus," preached "Christ crucified," and he writes to the Corinthians, sometime after he had preached Christ there: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified."[53] There seems to have been no doubt whatsoever that the Heavenly-Christ, the ever-present-Christ, was the same as the crucified and risen Christ. The cross of Christ was Paul's great theme, and the indwelling Christ his ever present master and friend.

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[50] John 12:32. [51] John 15:13.

[52] II Cor. 5:14. [53] I Cor. 1:23; 2:2.

Salvation in the New Testament sense includes deliverance from sin, escape from the penalties of sin and from sin itself, and admission into blessed union with Christ. It is thought of as past, present, and future. Christ is able to save to the uttermost those that draw near unto God through him, seeing that he lives forever to make intercession for them.[54] Salvation is used in the New Testament chiefly for spiritual deliverance. The very name of Jesus means "Savior," or "Jehovah is Savior." "You shall call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sin."[55] Christ is the Savior of all men, and the salvation he gives includes the whole of man, body, soul, and spirit. Christ is the bestower of salvation, man the recipient. The conditions from the human side are repentance, faith, and obedience. The extent of salvation embraces time and eternity. Moreover, he is Lord of all and the only Savior; there is salvation in no other; "For neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved."[56] Having such a Savior to offer to the nations, the end could be foretold from the beginning.

(2) Christianity had a universal gospel to offer to the world.

In the New Testament the word "gospel" means "good news." The word sometimes stands for the record of the life of our Lord.[57] But the word "gospel" primarily means the message which Christianity proclaims. "Good News" is its significance. It means a gift from God, a proclamation of the forgiveness of sins and of sonship with God, restored through the coming of Christ. The gospel means the remission of sins and the reconciliation with God. The gospel is not only the message of salvation, it is also the instrument through which salvation is accomplished. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."[58]

The source for the Christian usage is found in Isaiah 61:1.

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[54] Heb. 7:25. [55] Matt. 1:21. [56] Acts 4:12.

[57] Mark 1:1. [58] Rom. 1:16.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek."[59] The word used here in Septuagint for "preach good tidings" is εὐαγγελίσασθαι. Christ claimed to be the preacher of good tidings to the poor. The poor, the captives, the blind, the bruised are no longer political exiles. They are the bond-servants of sin, the poor and the outcasts to whom Judaism had no message of hope.[60]

Twice in the gospel according to Matthew, the ministry of our Lord is referred to as being a threefold one. "Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people."[61] Teaching was ethical teaching, intended to guide those who had previously accepted the gospel.[62] Preaching was proclaiming the good news and healing was restoring health to the sick.

The gospel then is the message which Christ and his apostles announced. This gospel is referred to under different names in the New Testament. It is called: "the gospel of God," "the gospel of Christ," "the gospel of peace," "the gospel of your salvation," "the glorious gospel."[63] Preaching of the gospel was essentially announcing new or good tidings of comfort and joy. It was a proclamation of a fact rather than instruction in ethics. the phrase "the gospel of God" indicates a message from God, about God, containing good news to men. Jesus gave the world a new idea of God. It was a revelation of God as our "Father in heaven." The Fatherhood of God was no new idea, but Jesus invested it with such radiance as to make it a new revelation. God becomes the Father not merely of a people, but of each individual. His Fatherhood extends to all sorts and conditions of men. The Father is seeking each sinner and welcomes even the prodigal to his home.[64] The Christian gospel declares that the bond that unites God with man is a bond of love.

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[59] Luke 4:18 quoted from the Septuagint Isa. 61:1.

[60] Luke 15:2; John 8:3-11.

[61] Matt. 4:23; 9:35.

[62] Matt. 5:19-48; 10:34-39; 12:31-37; 19:9-12; 21:33-34; 23; 24.

[63] Rom. 1:1; 1:16; Eph. 6:5; 1:13; II Cor. 4:4.

[64] Luke 15:1-32.

The gospel of the kingdom of heaven is an announcement that it has been opened to all believers. It was not meant for select classes or nations, but for all, even publicans and sinners may come. The kingdom of heaven is offered not to the rich or to the wise, but to all who will become as little children.[65] It is a universal kingdom. It has no borders. All nations must be invited to sit at its hospitable table,[66] and people of every nation will sit at table there. The presence of Jesus in the world was the gospel itself. It was "glad tidings of great joy to all people."[67] His coming was the manifestation of the love of God. The barrier between God and the soul is sin. Christ claimed power on earth to forgive sins,[68] and he exercised that power.[69]

Jesus was conscious of a deeper mission than preaching the gospel. He came to give his life as a ransom for many.[70] He was the Good Shepherd, laying down his life for the sheep.[71] The sacrificial element in Jesus' life was evident throughout his whole ministry and he looked upon his death as having a blessed significance for men.[72]

The gospel, which the messengers of Christ offered to the Graeco-Roman world was, a loving heavenly Father, the Creator and Sustainer of man and the universe, a loving, suffering Savior, who through his death and resurrection secured for all free and full salvation, a kingdom of God in which justice, peace, and equality reigned, and an ever-present helper in trouble here below, and eternal joy and happiness in mansions above.

(3) Christianity had sacred scriptures in which were revealed the will of God, to offer to the world.

The earliest Bible of the Christian Church was the Old Testament. The Old Testament scriptures were from the first the authoritative Bible of Christianity. The church came into existence with a sacred book already in its hand. It was the Bible of Jesus and his apostles. From the outset, among both Jewish and Gentile Christians, it was the source of life and inspiration, and knowledge, and truth, and the final place of appeal in discussion.

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[65] Matt. 11:25; 18:3.

[66] Matt. 8:11; 26:13; Mark 13:10.

[67] Luke 2:10. [68] Mark 2:10

[69] Luke 7:47; John 5;14, 22. [70] Matt. 20:28.

[71] John 10:11. [72] John 14:3.

God had revealed his will in the Scriptures. He had spoken at sundry times and in divers manners unto the fathers by the prophets,[73] and other holy men. Christians believed that God's revelation of himself in the Old Testament was a partial and gradual one, and that part of this revelation had been superseded by the coming of Jesus Christ, who was the highest revelation of God. "In these last days he has spoken unto us by his Son."[74]

The God who had spoken through the prophets of old was the same who spoke through Jesus Christ. There was no break; it was a continuous revelation. There was only one God the Creator of heaven and of earth, and who was the Father of Jesus Christ, and the Father, although in a different sense, of mankind. In the Old Testament, which they used chiefly for devotional purposes, they read of the character of God and his dealings with man; in it they found a practical guide to life and morals. Through its pages God still spoke to them, words of warning, comfort, and inspiration. In it they found evidence that their Lord and Master was truly their promised Messiah. The prophecies had been fulfilled in him. The children loved the stories of the men and women of old, and the Christians continued to use them in instructing the young.

There were some parts of the law, relating to ceremonials, rituals, dietary laws, circumcision, et cetera, which Christians believed they were not bound by any longer, but they found edification in an allegorical explanation, adopted from the Greeks and from Philo. In this way it was possible to trace Christianity way back into the history of man. It was to them the book of origins: of the universe, of man, of evil, of salvation. From this book the Christians, following the Jewish examples, read in their worship services and in it they found texts for sermons and hymnals of praise and thanksgiving.

The Hebrew Scriptures had been translated into Greek, the so-called Septuagint, and was ready for use. This translation had been done by competent Jews, well versed in the languages concerned. It was one of the many services Judaism has done to the world, one of the greatest, if not the greatest. The Hellenistic world had been given an opportunity to hear one of the world's greatest classics read every Sabbath in the Synagogue and in the Christian church. And those who were able to procure part of it, or the whole, and read it with benefit, were given an opportunity to do so at leisure at home.

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[73] Heb. 1:1. [74] Heb. 1:2.

The Christian "Fathers" saw in this translation of the Hebrew Bible the providence of God. It was the first version of it and undoubtedly the most important. It was translated into the common language of the Greek people (κοινή), and it was easily understood by the common people. The origin of the translation and the reason for it have come down to us in various versions. Aristeas claims that he was sent by emperor Philadelphus as an ambassador to the High Priest Eleazar of Jerusalem to ask for a copy of the law and men to translate it.[75] It was prompted by the literary interest of this bibliophile king. Another version has it, that it was prompted by the religious wants of the Jewish communities. In the Diaspora the Hebrews had to a very large extent forgotten their mother-tongue and spoke almost exclusively Greek. The Hebrew Scripture, when read to them on the Sabbath, had to be translated into the vernacular. The need for a translation was an urgent one. Philo voices the opinion that the translation was done for propaganda purpose in the pagan world.[76] It may be that all these reasons played their part in the production of the Septuagint.

The Hebrew Bible in Greek became a mighty help in the spread of Christianity. Christian preachers borrowed from it its monotheistic cosmology and the view of nature; by its aid they dated back their religion to the very beginning of things and connected it with creation itself, and by its prophecies they found their best proof of the veracity of their religion. Converts to Christianity were won by the reading of the Septuagint.

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[75] Henry Barclay Swete, An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek (Cambridge: University Press, 1914), Greek Text, pp. 551-606.

[76] Professor H. Graetz in The History of the Jews, I, 512, says: "The Greek translation was the first apostle Judaism sent forth to the heathen world to heal it of its perversity and godlessness."

We have one positive testimony by Tatian:

> When I was paying earnest heed to what was profitable, some barbarian writings came into my hands, which were too old for Greek ideas and too divine for Greek error. These I was led to trust, owing to their very simplicity of expression, and the unstudied character of their authors, owing to their intelligible description of creation, their foreknowledge of the future, the excellence of their precepts, and their embracing the whole universe under the sole rule of God.[77]

This testimony is valuable for the manner in which it brings out the significance of the Old Testament, and its complete and clear statement of the reasons for its influence. The form of the book, its vigorous style, and its simplicity, made a lasting impression upon him, the creation story in Genesis captivated him, the prophetic foreknowledge of the future aroused his interest, the moral code gripped him, and monotheism and the universal rule of God took hold of his heart. He found in the sacred book a philosophy of life that satisfied him. He was led to Christ by the Old Testament. And he is only one of the many.[78]

Christianity in its earliest stage was too busy proclaiming the good news about Jesus Christ to think of producing a Christian canon. They were living under the constant expectation of his early return. But as the years went on, one Christian writer after the other began to write Christian literature. The writers had no thought of producing a New Testament, a literature that would live on generation after generation. This literature was produced to fill a need of the rapidly expanding Christianity. Paul's Epistles were all written to meet some problems that had arisen in the churches. He could not go there himself, and so he wrote them a letter. These Epistles were found so helpful and of such a value, that they were kept as a treasure by the church, until some day they were collected and published as a Pauline Corpus. The fascinating story of Jesus of Nazareth many Christians attempted to write. This also arose out of a pressing demand in the Christian communities. As long as those persons lived, who had seen Jesus in the flesh, the need may not have been so acute. But when they, one after another, passed away, and doctrinal and heretical views arose, troubling the church, an accurate and authoritative story of Jesus became the cry of the day. The church sometime during the first half of the second century accepted four gospels as authoritative. These were read together with the Old Testament Scriptures in Christian assemblies, in homes and churches. Acts and the Epistles of Paul were soon added. This was the nucleus of a New Testament. Christian literature continued to grow in volume and it took some time before the New Testament Canon was finally fixed. During the period in which we are especially interested, the New Testament books, as a whole, did not play the important role as sacred Scripture that the Old Testament did. The gospels probably did in the second and third centuries. The story of Jesus Christ, the "Divine Savior," caught the people's interest as nothing else could do.

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[77] Tatian Arat. xxix.

[78] Theophilus of Antioch and Hilary of Poitiers owed their first impressions of the gospel to the Old Testament in particular, and thousands knew Christ through the book of Psalms. James Moffatt, The First Five Centuries of the Church (London: University of London Press, 1938), p. 58.

The Christian sermons centered about Jesus Christ and him crucified, and the books telling about his deeds, and words, and passion, and resurrection, and ascension soon became Christian scripture on par with the Old Testament. By some it was rated so high, that they thought the Hebrew Bible was not worthy a place beside it in Christian usage. This was then the sacred scriptures, the complete Old Testament in Greek and the gradually emerging New Testament which Christianity offered to the world. What other religion had ever produced such sacred books? What other religion was in possession of such literature? In what other books could one find such lofty monotheism and such self-sacrificing love? Where such ethical teaching and such high morality? It seemed that the very Spirit of God was breathed into its sacred pages. God spoke to men's heart out of its pages as no other tome had ever done. The Christians claimed that it was, indeed, the very word of God. Here was a unique book, desperately needed by the world as a guide-book for this life and the next, offered to it. Why not take it as a chart in sailing life's rough seas?

(4) Christianity had high ethical principles, and power to live accordingly, to offer to the world.

Ethics is that branch of philosophy which is concerned with human character and conduct. The ethics of the Old Testament was a religious ethic. In Christian ethics we are face to face with a creative personality, entering into the current of human history, and with his preëminent spiritual force, giving direction to the moral life of men. Christian ethics can only be understood in connection with his personality. Christian ethics took its rise from the ethical ideals embodied in Christ's life, his examples, and his teaching.

The chief business of ethics is to answer the question:- What is man's supreme good? For what should a man live? What is, in short, the ideal of life? A Christian would answer somewhat like this: Man's highest good consists generally in doing God's will, and in the attainment of the likeness to Christ, and in realization of man's relation to God, to Christ, and to man. Christ, in the New Testament, is the ideal, the pattern, the principle, the power of the new Christian life.

The Graeco-Roman world emphasized the four cardinal virtues: wisdom, fortitude, temperance, and justice. Christianity did not abolish them. It adopted them, but in so doing, it put its own stamp upon them. Christianity profoundly modified their character. The heroic virtues had a right to call themselves such only if they were motivated by love to God and man. If performed for display, praise, popularity and self-aggrandizement, they were virtues no longer.

The "amiable virtues," also called the "gentler virtues," more truly expressed the spirit of Christ: Love, humility, meekness, long-suffering, contentment, patience, forbearance, et cetera.

The great ethical principle of Jesus is "love." The other principles may be regarded as corollaries to this. When the lawyer asked Jesus, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus answered him: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and the great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."[79] To love one's neighbor as oneself constituted, in Jesus' view, a duty second only to that of loving God. The two together were the greatest commandments of the law. In the parable, spoken in reply to the lawyer's question, the neighbors are a Jew and a Samaritan. In the "Sermon on the Mount" Jesus demands love for enemies. The universality of the principle appears also in the words: "All things whatsoever you wish that men should do to you, even so do you also to them."[80]

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[79] Matt. 22:36-39. [80] Matt. 7:12.

Truthfulness and honesty is another ethical principle. Jesus was stern in denouncing all deceit, false-witness, hypocrisy and pretense. You ought to be so honest and truthful that there would be no need for you to swear at all. Let your yes be yes, and your no, no.[81] Paul, in speaking of his life as a Christian missionary, in all its varied aspects and vicissitudes, mentions sincere love and truthful speech as among its characteristics. Pagans are generally weak when it comes to these virtues. They may even act at times as if dishonesty and untruthfulness were virtues. But in spite of this, they have a keen appreciation of these virtues, with a certain limitation.

Humility and humble service. Jesus frequently enjoins humility: "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."[82] He condemns arrogance, especially as exhibited by the Scribes and Pharisees. He describes himself as "lowly in heart,"[83] and does so in connection with his offer to provide rest and refreshment for those who are burdened. He washes the disciples' feet and bids them do the same for one another.[84] When they dispute about precedence among themselves, he says:

> Whosoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whosoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and give his life a ransom for many.[85]

This service was to be a universal service. He called them to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

The ethical principle of prudence or wisdom. When the apostles were about to go forth as sheep among wolves, Jesus counselled them to be, not only innocent as doves, but prudent, or shrewd, like serpents.[86] He regretted that the "sons of this age are more prudent than the sons of light towards their own generation."[87] Among the evil things that come from the heart of man he reckoned folly.[88] Christianity was thought of as itself the true wisdom, and the difference between the Christian and non-Christian was the difference between wisdom and folly. The apostle to the Gentiles exhorts: "Behave wisely toward outsiders, making the most of your opportunities."[89]

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[81] Matt. 5:37. [82] Matt. 23:12. [83] Matt. 11:29.

[84] John 13:4-17. [85] Mark 9:43-45. [86] Matt. 10:16.

[87] Luke 16:8. [88] Mark 7:22.

Matthew 5-7 contains the gist of the ethical principles of Christianity. It is the law of the kingdom of God. In some of his matchless parables Christ taught ethical principles. In the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, he taught forgiveness, in the Pharisee and the Publican, he condemns self-righteousness, in the Good Samaritan, he taught duty to one's neighbor, in the Two Sons, he emphasized true and false obedience, and in the Dives and Lazarus, he set forth the peril of loving this world.

The ethical principles are high, and the non-Christian may well say: "They are high and good and beautiful, but it is not in my power to follow them." To this the Christian would answer: "True, but you can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth you."[90] "With God all things are possible."[91] These principles are there not to be admired, but to be put into practice. God will give you strength to live a pure and benevolent and useful life. God will give you a new heart and change your mind and your desire. Christ himself will lead you on. He himself will be your Master and teacher. He specializes in the impossible. His yoke is easy and his burden is light.[92]

(5) Christianity had deliverance from the power and the fear of demons to offer to the world.

Belief in the existence of superhuman, good and malevolent spirits is probably as old as any form of religious belief, and is the survival of primitive religion. There was early a tendency among the Hebrews to identify various diseases with demons, as in the case of the evil spirit that troubled Saul.[93] When Israel came in contact with the Babylonians and Persians the belief in demons was further developed. During the two centuries immediately preceding the Christian era demonology developed very rapidly. The unseen world was peopled with angels and demons. Angels watched over the welfare of individuals, demons caused sickness of various kinds, both physical and psychical.[94] The Rabbinical method of healing involved the use of various noxious materials, and magical names and formulas.[95] In Babylonia the demonology was especially developed. The demons were everywhere. They lurked in every corner, watching for their prey. They frequented the city streets, the rivers, the seas, and the mountain tops. They caused all sorts of illness and misfortunes.

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[89] Col. 4:5. [90] Phil. 4:13. [91] Mark 14:36.

[92] Matt. 11:30. [93] I Sam. 16:14-16.

[94] Tob.3:7 ff.; 6:7. [95] Jos. _Ant_. viii.2.5; cf.Matt.12:27.

With the coming of the Oriental religions and the conglomeration of races in the Roman Empire, belief in demons spread far and wide in the Mediterranean world. The Egyptian and the Persian priests were famous for their exorcism.[96] In Greece there was quite early a belief in spirits, and even a philosopher like Plato supported it.[97]

When, therefore, Christianity emerged, there was in the world already a widespread belief in demons, both in the Jewish and in the pagan world. Jesus spoke of the kingdom of God and of the angels of God. The evil spirits came very early to be regarded as forming a kingdom by itself, with Satan as supreme ruler. The Son of God came into the world to combat Satan and his kingdom. The evangelists, especially Luke, depicted Jesus, from the temptation onward, as being in an uninterrupted conflict with the devil. He preached throughout all Galilee in the synagogues and cast out the demons.[98] When he sent forth the twelve disciples he conferred on them the power of exorcising.[99] Even during the lifetime of Jesus exorcists, who were not authorized by him, exorcised devils in his name. In answer to John's critical remarks, Jesus said: "Forbid him not. No one shall work a deed of might in my name, and then deny me presently, for he who is not against us is for us."[100] To cast out evil spirits, from those whom they possessed, was therefore an attack upon the kingdom of Satan, which Christ had come to destroy.

Belief in demons and in the power they exercised throughout the world was current far and wide. They were everywhere, causing every kind of imaginable difficulties for men, and sicknesses of every sort. Man was completely at their mercy, as they were much the stronger than he. Causes of diseases were as yet unknown. It was a very common belief that demons entered into the bodies of men and took possession of them, controlling every action. These unfortunate sufferers came to believe it themselves, and their belief was so firm that no one could convince them to the contrary.

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[96] Adolf Harnack, The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries, op. cit., p. 156.

[97] Ibid. [98] Mark 1:39. [99] Luke 10:17.

[100] Mark 9:38, 39.

Jews and pagans had their exorcists, who by magical formulas and other means attempted to cast out demons and free the possessed person. We are told that the seventy were happily surprised when they, to their astonishment, found that even the demons were subject to them in Jesus' name.[101] Later on we hear of Jews and pagans exorcising demons in the name of Jesus, not always with happy results.[102] Men sought for release from the power and the fear of demons with the gods. Only a mighty god, it was believed, could cope with them, with any hope of success. The name of Jesus Christ became known as being feared by the demons above every other name.

Relatives and friends, and sometimes the disturbed person himself, sought out the followers of Jesus and pleaded with them to come to their rescue. Christians, thinking of themselves as soldiers of Jesus Christ, enlisted in his service to fight the evil powers in the world under his command, gladly took up the challenge. They do not even seem to have demanded that the possessed one, or his relatives, or his friends should swear allegiance to Christ. This undoubtedly many did afterward, when they had become healed. Harnack says:

> Exorcism formed one very powerful method of their mission and propaganda. It was a question not simply of exorcising and vanquishing the demons that dwelt in individuals, but also of purifying all public life from them. The whole world and the circumambient atmosphere were filled with devils. They sat on thrones, they hovered around cradles. The earth was literally a hell, though it was and continued to be a creation of God. To encounter this hell and all its devils, Christians had command of weapons that were invincible.[103]

To men and women living in a demon-infested society Christianity came with relief and deliverance. To get rid of the fear engendered by the demons, surely was a good thing, but to come under the protection of one who was stronger than the demons, that was felicity, indeed.

Missionaries, having spent twenty, thirty, or more years upon certain mission fields, are able to tell us how actual and realistic this fear of demons is today. Houses are haunted by evil spirits. "Door-gods" are pasted on doors to guard against demons. Certain words or names are not to be spoken. Streets have to be laid out and houses built in a certain fashion as a protection against evil spirits. "Possessed persons" are not an uncommon occurrence--and a very strange phenomena they are. Missionaries are sometimes asked to pray for these unfortunates. Relatives and friends come pleading for them, and any help the missionary may be able to give is taken as a sign of divine intervention.

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[101] Luke 10:17. [102] Acts 19:13-17.

[103] Adolf Harnack, op. cit., pp. 160, 161.

To people living under constant fear of demons the gospel narratives come as good news. Jesus Christ has the power to deliver men from the evil spirits and the demons. They have no difficulty with the narratives of demon-possessed healings in the New Testament, as we twentieth century Americans may have. It is just what these people have been longing after and unconsciously praying for.

The conditions in the Graeco-Roman world in the three first centuries of our era, and conditions on some of the mission fields in the twentieth century were and are very much similar. One cannot now and one could not then argue them out of their belief in demonology. Medical missionaries are often coming to our rescue, and where medical science is unable to effect any relief, the only effective way seems to be to point them to one who is able to save them from every disturbance of body and mind, and who can take away the very fear that has haunted them for centuries.

The earliest Christians believed in the powers of the demons. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."[104] They believed that part of their missionary calling was to destroy the power of the evil one and his kingdom. All that we are trying to do here is to establish the fact that exorcism was a very effective missionary method. Christianity came with relief and deliverance. It was good news to that world and that age.

(6) Christianity had divine love to offer to the world.

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[104] Eph. 6:12.

Love, whether used of God or man, is an earnest and anxious desire for an active and beneficient interest in the well-being of the one loved. Love in God is that principle, which leads him to desire and seek the good of all his moral creatures, to establish fellowship with them, that he may bless them more fully and admit them into his own blessed life. In the Old Testament the love of God is love only to the covenant-people. But in the New Testament God's love takes in the whole world: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."[105]

In all pagan religions the deity is set forth as an angry being, in constant need of appeasing. Christianity is the only religion that pictures the Supreme Being as love. The new language on the lips of Christians was the language of love. The highest and holiest thing that can be learned in all religions is to believe in the love of God.[106] It came as a new revelation. It is the highest testimony to God ever given by man--a testimony which can never be surpassed. It is also the highest testimony to the dignity of man ever spoken. To be loved by the Supreme Being at once bestows upon man such an honor that it raises him far above every other created being. The New Testament writer condensed the central principle of the new religion into a great statement, when he wrote: "We love him, because he first loved us," and "God so loved the world." "A new commandment give I unto you, that you love one another, as I have loved you."[107] The love of God raised man to divine sonship. "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."[108] The greatest thing ever written by the apostle Paul was the hymn of love.[109] The name of God is not mentioned therein and still his presence is felt in every line. Human love cannot rise to such heights unaided. But God is perfect love, such as the hymn describes it, and he can by his love inspire man to scale the lofty heights with him.

God's love to man is a general love, but it is also a special love. He loves the whole world and every individual in it.

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[105] John 3:16.

[106] Adolf Harnack, op. cit., p. 183.

[107] I John 4:19; John 3:16; John 13:34.

[108] I John 3:1. [109] I Cor. 13.

Those who trust in God are the objects of God's special love and do his will. God's love for Christ is given as a pattern for God's love to them.[110] They are in the very center of God's love. But as the very essence of God is love, he cannot limit his love to them. It goes out to every individual in the whole world, even to those who despise him and have turned their faces away from him and are far away from him. In the parable of the prodigal son Jesus gives a vivid description of the heavenly Father and his attitude to his prodigal sons. He is patiently waiting for their return and stands ever ready to welcome them back. God's love in such cases takes the form of rescuing them from a dangerous condition. God is not willing that anyone should perish, but that all should come to repentance.[111] He "will have all men to be saved and come into the knowledge of the truth."[112] The purpose of sending Jesus Christ into the world was that "whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."[113]

God is "Spirit," "Light," and "Truth."[114] This is an expression of his essential nature. Love is the expression of God's personal interest in man. God is love and from him as a source all love is derived. God's love is fathomless and universal.

The supreme manifestation of God's love to the world is given in Christ. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."[115] "For the love of Christ constraineth us."[116] Paul had only one passion, and that was to make Christ's love known everywhere in the world. "The Son of God loved me and gave himself for me."[117]

The Christian message thus became a message of Love, personified in Christ Jesus. The object of this love was man and his salvation from sin. The divine love was a sacrificial love. The value of man, in God's estimation, was so great that no sacrifice was too great to bring about his salvation. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."[118] Christ died not only for his friends, but also for his enemies.

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[110] John 17:23. [111] II Peter 3:9.

[112] I Tim. 2:4. [113] John 3:16.

[114] John 4:24; I John 1:5; I John 1:6.

[115] Rom. 5:8. [116] II Cor. 5:14. [117] Gal. 2:20.

[118] John 15:13.

It was this unique, divine love that Christianity proclaimed to the world. There is no power on earth greater than sacrificial love, and no sacrificial love greater than Christ's. The cross was a stumbling block for many, but love made the cruel cross into the greatest magnetic power known to man, thus fulfilling the saying of Jesus: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."[119] Paul preached Jesus Christ and him crucified. But he was sure to make it known, that Christ died as a sacrifice for men, not for any evil deeds of his own. He was the Savior God, who out of love for men died on the cross in order to bring them to God.

This divine love raised man to be the friend of God and of his Christ. Man is precious in God's sight. He is the prodigal son loved by God. Christ counted man so precious that he was worth dying for. Here was personality at its highest, and here was Deity at its best. Men and women brought up under the impression that Deity was stern and angry with sinful men, listened with astonishment at this message. Most of them belonged to the lower strata of society and many were slaves. They had few friends in the world and very little of this earth's goods. The message of God's love and of the suffering and dying Savior gripped their hearts. It was almost too good to be true. It is easy to imagine how they flocked around the Christian messenger, questioning him: "Do you really mean to say that God loves me, and that Christ died for me?" When told that it meant him he believed and went out and told others about it.

(7) Christianity had life eternal to offer to the world.

Probably no other single subject has so puzzled the human mind as "life." What is life? From whence is it? Where did it originate? Does death end it all or is there another life? The keenest minds of every age have tried to find an answer to these and similar questions. Life is a mystery--we all live it, but no one can fully explain it. Life is a very precious gift. Without it there would have been no humanity. In order to preserve it a few more years, months, or days, a man is willing to part with all he has. Still life at its best is full of worry and irritations. It lasts only for a few years, and then every human life comes to an end.

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[119] John 12:32.

There was a time when men troubled their minds, trying to find the elixir of life, the pill of immortality, without any success. Medical science has made a most remarkable progress during the last century and has succeeded in considerably lengthening the average life-span of man, but it has not succeeded in vanquishing death itself.

The Mystery Religions owed a great deal of their success to their promise of immortality and a blessed life in the nether world. Christianity made even greater promises. Christian missionaries preached resurrection from among the dead and eternal life. The resurrection of Jesus was for them a sure evidence that some day the dead were to rise from their graves. Christ had conquered death when he rose from the dead. Death was a conquered enemy. It had lost its sting for those who put their trust in Christ. The Savior-Gods of the Mysteries had experienced some kind of resurrection, but somehow they were never able to leave their abode in the nether world for any length of time. Christ died and went down to Hades, but death was not able to keep him imprisoned. He broke the gates of Hades and rose victoriously. Then he ascended in triumph to heaven where he is sitting at the right hand of the Almighty.

Heaven, and not the nether world, is his eternal abode. To heaven he is gathering all those who believe on him, and from there he is to return for the great, final judgment, when the dead in Christ are to be raised first, and then those not in Christ, and all are to be judged.

Eternal Life (αἰώνιος ζωή) is described as a gift of God, and as bestowed upon those who believe in Christ.[120] "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." It is spoken of as eternal, because in opposition to the earthly life, which comes to an end, this life is to continue forever and ever. Heaven, the eternal abode of the blest, is spoken of as a place where there is no sorrow, nor pain, nor death, where no one ever grows old.

Eternal life is bestowed upon every believer in Christ.

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[120] Rom. 6:23; John 10:28.

Christ is the possessor of eternal life. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.[121] He that has the Son, has life. Eternal life is a present possession for those who are in Christ. They have already passed from death unto life. The life they now live in communion with Christ is never to end. Physical death is only a sleep in Christ, and when they awake they are still in Christ and with Christ. "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."[122] But the eternal life has also a glorious future fruition. It will blossom out into an everlasting fellowship with God and his Christ.

This was what Christianity offered to the world: an eternal home with God, mansions above, where Jesus has gone to prepare room, an eternity of blessedness so great that no tongue can ever describe it. Compared with the somewhat shady existence of the dead in the Mystery Religions this is quite an advance. Eternal life is a free gift to men. The only conditions are faith and obedience.[123]

Christ never defines eternal life, neither his apostles. The nearest to a definition are these words spoken by Jesus in his "high-priestly prayer." "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent."[124] In the same intercessory prayer Jesus said, that his mission in the world was to give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him.[125] Immortality and eternal life is within reach of all. Christ has vanquished death, the enemy of man. His gift to a despondent world is life eternal. This gift is free and it is a personal gift, for you.

(8) Christianity had efficacious sacraments to offer to the world.

Compared with the other things, which Christianity had to offer to the world, the sacraments seem to hold a subordinate place. To a certain extent that may be true, although not in the estimation of the people of the Graeco-Roman world. All the Mystery Religions made much of sacraments. Salvation, regeneration, new birth, were some of the results of the sacraments in the Mysteries. During centuries of missionary propaganda the Mysteries had succeeded in thoroughly implanting the effectiveness of sacraments as a means of redemption. It was into this religious milieu that Christianity came as a competing missionary religion.

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[121] John 14:6.

[122] John 11:25, 26.

[123] Rom. 7:10; I Tim. 1:16.

[124] John 17:3.

[125] John 17:2.

One of the first questions that our Christian missionaries were asked was: What sacred rites do you have?—Have you any sacraments like the Mystery Religions? When they heard that the new religion had two at least, its estimation was considerably enhanced.

The word "sacrament" is not found in the New Testament and not in any Christian writer until we come to Tertullian. The use of the word by Pliny, in his account of the worship of the Christians in Bithynia, seems to be no more than an interesting coincidence.[126] The name is derived from Latin and is of late origin. The meaning of "sacrament" in Christian usage is: "An outward and visible sign of an invisible, inward spiritual grace." Another definition is found in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession: "Sacraments are rites, which have the command of God, and to which promise of grace has been added."[127]

The Greek Catholic Church has seven sacraments, the Protestants only two. These are baptism and the Lord's Supper. The origin of these sacraments is not very clear, but the fact remains that in some form or other they seem to have been practised in the Christian church from the earliest time. The early Christians believed that they had been instituted by Christ himself. Baptism was practiced as an initiatory rite, and the Lord's Supper was celebrated as a Christian communion service and in commemoration of the redemptive work by their Lord and Master. Judaism practiced a proselyte-baptism, the forerunner of Christ baptised, and at least in some of the Mystery Religions baptism was one of the initiatory rites. Judaism had their Passover feast, and the Mysteries had their sacramental eating and drinking. Sacraments were well known and highly esteemed.

The Christian God was unique in his wisdom and might, and the Christian Savior-God was unequalled both in his attributes and in his redemptive work. Likewise the Christian sacraments were said to be more efficacious than any sacraments of the

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[126] Pliny Ep. 96.

[127] Melanchton Apology (1531).

Mysteries. It was believed that remission of sins, purification, the Holy Spirit, regeneration, and salvation, were obtained in the sacrament of baptism.[128] The Lord's Supper was a divine communion service, in which the dying and risen Savior communicated himself to his believer, under the sacred elements of bread and wine. It was much more efficacious than the rites performed by the Mysteries, because the Christian rites were accompanied by the very words by which the Lord had instituted them.

The Greek Catholic Church calls the sacraments "mysteries" (μυστήριον). There were some similarities with the sacraments of the mysteries, but also some notorious dissimilarities. The oath of secrecy was missing entirely, nothing mysterious or magical was shown to them, and by special permission outsiders were admitted as onlookers. It was first, when Christianity became a proscribed religion, that closed baptismal and communion services, as is natural, were practiced. This was done as a protection against spies, eager to notify the local authorities.

In the Christian sacraments, Christianity had something, considered extremely valuable, to offer to the world. The Christians were de facto saying to their non-Christian friends and neighbors: "Come over to us; be a Christian, be baptised; and partake with us in the Lord's Supper, and you will here and now triumph over sin and death and experience a foretaste of the joy which awaits you in heaven."

II. Missionary Methods

(1) Travelling missionaries and local church ministry.

Among the various agencies employed by the Christian movement none was more important than the Christian ministry. As to the calling and consignment of labor, this ministry was of two kinds: a local ministry and a travelling ministry. The local ministry served the local churches in various capacities, and the travelling ministry was the advance guard of the expanding Christian movement. These were the apostles (those being sent), the missionaries. They had chosen as their life-work to be missionary pioneers of the gospel. They were called by God and sent by some local church, or churches.[129] They were distinguished, not so much by what they were as by what they did. They were wandering missionaries with no fixed place of residence.

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[128] Acts 2:38; Tit. 3:5; Mark 16:16.

[129] Acts 13:1. It would not be correct to call them "foreign missionaries," as they seldom went to foreign Countries. Paul,

The church at Syrian Antioch is a good example of how a local ministry developed into a missionary ministry. In that church were certain prophets and teachers ministering to the increasingly growing church there. They were told by the Holy Spirit: "Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."[130] The two being sent are later called "apostles," a term corresponding closely to our "missionary." The would-be missionary started his work generally as a local church worker. There he tested his wings, before setting out for new shores and different experiences.

The Christian officials in early Christianity, as enumerated by Paul, were: apostles, prophets, and teachers.[131] They were maintained in such purity until the beginning of the second century. The apostles, or missionaries, travelled about in the world and preached to those who were still unbelievers. Their task did not tolerate their remaining settled. Paul is the outstanding example of this type of travelling missionaries. He was a ceaseless traveller on land and sea. When he was persecuted in one place, he went to the next to preach the "good news." He stayed at one place long enough to found a church and set over it some kind of organization and a preaching ministry, and then he moved on to the next place, until he had established a chain of churches on the northern shores of the Mediterranean. He gathered around him a considerable group of fellow-laborers and sent them out on missionary tours of their own. What Paul did on a large scale in his sphere, other missionaries did on a similar or smaller scale in their spheres of work.

Apostles seem to have had no counterpart in Judaism, which is quite natural if we stop to think. Jewish proselyte-propaganda work always started with a group of Jewish immigrants

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for example, was a home missionary all his life. He never went outside the Roman Empire, and he never needed to learn a foreign language in order to tell the good news. This was, of course, a tremendous advantage over present-day foreign missionaries.

[130] Acts 13:1-3.

[131] I Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:6-9.

as a nucleus. Christianity set out to win the world, and within a remarkably short time it took on an international character. Christian missionaries planted churches among the Greeks and the Romans, in places where there were not any Jews. Wherever human beings lived, there the Christian missionaries went and preached and gathered together a nucleus for a Christian church. The quick diffusion of the Christian cult, even unto far away districts, hardly touched by commerce, cannot be understood except we constantly have before us the ceaseless activities of the travelling servants of the Christian God.[132]

The prophets, however, worked continually in one place, insofar as they were filled with the divine spirit, and preached to the church as messengers of a higher revelation. They prayed with and for the church, they saw visions and prophesied. They were "the pastors in charge" of the church and conducted its worship as the spirit prompted them.

The teachers were the heralds of the word. They were the expounders of the sacred scriptures. They held the same importance in early Christianity as the scribes and teachers in Judaism. They were no visionaries and lacked in ecstatic enthusiasm, but they gave sound theological instruction and were good shepherds of the sheep.

These three offices required the entire devotion of the whole man and left no time for a secular calling. Hence they had a claim upon the churches for their livelihood. The divisions between the officials were not sharply made, and they undoubtedly spent at least part of their time in missionary work among pagans within their own town or city, or in neighboring localities. The missionary spirit was alive in the church, and these men sought out pagans, or were sought out by them, for a conversational talk about Christ and his teaching. As described in Acts 13, this triad of officers was pre-Pauline. They were not instituted by men but by God. They were "charismatic," i. e., dependent upon a special gift of divine grace. He whom God chose by imparting his own spirit, was a teacher, prophet, or apostle.

In addition to these offices, which may be called the "prophetical ministry," others grew out of the daily needs of life. They grew out of the sociological needs of the individual churches. In the opening salutation of Philippians,[133] we find the characteristic titles of these offices, that became normative for the future; "bishops," and "deacons." Their task was to care for the secular business of the individual church, including the prime concern of looking after those in need. Bishop means "overseer," in all the innumerable applications of the term. Deacon means "servant," and in particular,one who serves at table, a waiter. The deacons served the church at the Lord's Supper and carried the bread and wine to the homes of those who were absent.[134] Those absent were mostly the sick, and thus the deacons combined their office with that of looking after the sick. According to Didache both these offices were conferred by election.[135]

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[132] Cf. Reitzenstein, Die Hellenistischen Mysterien-Religionen, op. cit., p. 25 and passim.

Toward the end of the first century a new development took place. The bishops already appeared as the appointed leaders of the cultus. They offered a "blameless and holy sacrifice."[136] The transition seems to have taken place side by side with the gradual decline of the pneumatics. The bishops and deacons then added to their previous functions that of leading public worship as priests.

Work in the service of the church was not confined to men. Paul describes an obviously well-to-do and philanthropic lady, named Phebe, "a deacon" of the church at Cenchreae, the port of Corinth. Even at that time the Christian church found it practical to elect woman deacons who, when their sex made them specially suitable, came forward and gave signal help in caring for the poor and the sick, and at the baptism of women.[137] There also appears to have been an order of the "widows." Thus in one instruction, dating from the second century, we read that, "In every congregation at least one widow is to be appointed to take care of sick women."[138] Then follows a description of the requirement as to Christian character of such a widow. By being taken into the service of the church, she was at the same time secured against want.[139]

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[133] Phil. 1:1.

[134] Ignatius Trall. 2:3; Justin Apol. 65:5.

[135] Didache 15. 1. [136] I Clem. 44:4.

[137] Hinschius Kirchenrecht. 1:8; Hans Lietzmann, The Beginnings of the Christian Church, op. cit., I, 192.

[138] Harnack, Texte und Untersuchungen, p. 23; cf. Harnack, The Expansion of Christianity, I, 149.

Women also shared in the higher gifts of the spirit. Philip, the evangelist, had four daughters who were prophetesses.[140]

All these offices grew out of sociological needs of the local churches and from a desire to make known the "good news" to those outside the church, whether they were living near or far. The ministry of the local church, whether of a spiritual type or a philanthropical, was by no means limited to those already in the church. There was a large group on the fringe of the church: catechumens, occasional attendants at church services, pagan relatives and friends of Christians, the poor and needy; these constituted a fruitful field for their activities. And then the whole Graeco-Roman world lay open to them, as a promising mission field.

(2) Ministers of healing.

The missionary agencies and methods in early Christianity and in the twentieth century are not the same. The sending churches at the beginning of our era were small and poverty stricken, while our denominations are strong, and rich, and wealthy and count their membership in millions. We think that some of our missionary methods are indispensible--and maybe they are in the twentieth century. The early Christians did not need any missionary budget. They could not have done any missionary work at all had they been compelled to adopt our methods. They did the sensible thing in their days and accomplished the task they had set out to do. Our twentieth century missionary methods--by no means perfect--have served their day and achieved results. As time changes, our missionary methods ought to be revised to suit the time. We are now in the midst of revolutionizing times. Maybe later generations will count our time as the finis of one age and the beginning of a new. It will undoubtedly have a tremendous bearing upon our future missionary work. Some of our missionary methods will have to be revised and new ones adopted.

There is one missionary method that the early Christians had from the very first, but which we moderns were rather slow in adopting. We refer to the ministers of healing, or as we generally call them, medical missionaries.

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[139] I Tim. 5:16. [140] Acts 21:9.

It was said of Dr. P. Parker, the first American medical missionary sent to China, and the first one ever sent there from any land, that "he opened China with his lancet." We have come to look upon medical missionary work as being of such great importance today, that we have found it hard to understand that there was a time, not so very long ago, when this type of missionary work was not appreciated and deemed unnecessary.

Christianity was from the beginning a religion of "healing." It was a religion for the whole of man and could not leave out the body. The New Testament does not belittle the body or speak contemptuously of it. Paul speaks of the body as "the temple of the Holy Spirit,"[141] and he admonishes them to "glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's." Jesus Christ, the foundation of Christianity, sets the love that tends the sick in the very center of his religion, when he says, "I was sick and you visited me . . . . . As you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."[142] Primitive Christianity carried this teaching of the Master in her heart; she also carried it out in practice. In the prayer of the church, preserved in the first Epistle of Clement, supplications are expressly offered for those who are sick in soul and body.[143]

Most of the gods of the Mysteries were healing gods and some of them were specialists. Asclepius was one of them. He was so loved by those to whom he had given relief and health that they called him "savior," the highest title they knew. There were Asclepeia and Serapeia in many places, where suffering humanity went seeking health to body and mind. Those who desired relief from any disease went to some temple. There they performed the necessary rites and sacrifices and laid themselves down to sleep, either in the skin of the animal they had sacrificed, or in a skin robe. This was spoken of as incubation. If they were successful, the god came in a vision and granted their request. Asclepius coördinated exorcism with external and internal medicine. According to the Greeks, sickness was due to a threefold cause, namely: to malevolent acts of some god, to malevolent acts of some sorcerer, or to malevolent acts of some demons.[144]

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[141] I Cor. 6:19, 20. [142] Matt. 25:36, 40.

[143] I Clement lix.

Christ's ministry on earth consisted in preaching, teaching, and healing.[145] When he sent out the twelve on a missionary tour, he commanded them to preach the "good news," and heal the sick and cast out the demons that were causing the diseases. They are said to have "cast out many demons and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them."[146] Thus they combined external medicine with exorcism in healing the sick. St. James has a very important passage bearing on the loving care for the sick and the healing methods they employed.

> Is any among you suffering? let him pray. Is any cheerful? let him sing praise. Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him. Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.[147]

Just as the application of remedies, like oil, may bring health, so the united prayer in faith by the faithful may be a real means in God's hand of regaining perfect soundness. Confession of sin and forgiveness are coupled together. Healing, as practiced by Jesus and his disciples, was something more than the mere alleviation of bodily distress. It was redemptive. It linked the sufferer with the ever-pitying Father. The gospel cures had both ethical and spiritual value.

The gift of healing was a special "charisma" given by the heavenly Christ.[148] Not every Christian had been granted this gift. Others had received several "charismata." Paul had this gift of healing and exercised it at several occasions: the cripple at Lystra; the damsel, possessed with a Python, at Philippi; the father of Publius, stricken with fever and dysentery, et cetera.[149] When Paul and his fellow-missionaries came to a place they brought with them healing to body and soul. In three different places in his epistles, Paul refers to Luke, "the beloved physician," my "fellow-laborer," who "is with me." If Luke is the author of the "we passages" in Acts, he was a travelling companion of Paul on some of his most important missionary journeys. He may then have practiced medicine on Malta, when they were shipwrecked there,[150] and it would seem that he was also a preacher of the "good news."[151]

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[144] George Gordon Dawson, Healing: Pagan and Christian (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1935), p. 35.

[145] Matt. 9:35. [146] Mark 6:13.

[147] James 5:13-16. [148] I Cor. 12:9, 28.

[149] Acts 14:10; 16:18; 28:8.

The apostles were ministers of healing, and they were accompanied by trained physicians. They had also abundant opportunities to exercise their power of exorcism. Sicknesses were supposed to be caused by the influence of demons. They cast out the demons and healed the sufferers. Occasionally this brought bodily release and healing. Their ministry of healing opened hearts and doors for the gospel and contributed considerably in making the mission of expansion self-supporting from the start. Natuarlly a medical missionary in early Christianity was not a scientifically trained man, as we think of a doctor today. They served also as exorcists and charismatics. They exerted a great influence and were employed also by Jews and pagans. Justin Martyr glories over in his day, that Christian exorcists had been able to achieve results even in most serious cases, given up by Jewish and pagan exorcists.[152]

(3) Christian writers.

One of the most astounding phenomena of the history of early Christianity is the literary activities. This literary activity came in the wake of the rapid expansion of Christianity. It was caused by this expansion, and it aimed at quickening this expansion. The writers of the New Testament had in view chiefly Gentile-Christian readers, when they wrote their epistles, gospels and Acts.

The early Christian writings may conveniently be classified into two groups, relating to their chief purpose. The first group was written for the Christian community and had to do with doctrine, edification, organization, et cetera. The other group was composed for non-Christian readers, setting forth the excellencies of the Christian teaching, meeting the objections raised against Christianity, defending it against calumnies, and pointing out the indefensibleness of many of the pagan positions. The first group of writings aimed at making the Christian church fit for its world mission, while the second group of writings tried to do away with obstacles and misconceptions, standing in the way for an advance all along the line.

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[150] Acts 28:9.

[151] Acts 16:13; Harnack, Luke the Physician, The Author of the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907).

[152] Karl Holl, Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1928), pp. 120, 121.

Most of these writing are of the popular kind. They were written mostly by men without any higher training in classical lore, and they catered to readers of the same class. Very few Christian writers wrote in classical Greek. They wrote in the popular, daily language of the day, the κοινή Greek. During the first and second centuries of the Christian era Greek was almost entirely the literary language of the Christian church. All the books in the New Testament were written in Greek. But in the latter part of the second century other languages clamored for Christian literature. Christianity was for every practical purpose born bilingual. It used Hebrew and Greek during the first century. During the second century it spoke and wrote mostly in Greek. In the third century Greek and Latin were the chief tongues of the church, and Christian writers wrote in both of them. But other languages, Syrian, Armenian, Coptic, claimed their share of the Christian message. Translations were made into these languages from Greek and native productions were put out.

These writings, which now constitute our New Testament, were used extensively as missionary literature. These books were read and expounded in the Christian services, to which also outsiders were admitted. Very few of the Christians could afford to acquire all the New Testament books. It was a bulky, expensive book, and even rich and wealthy pagans found it difficult to come in possession thereof. But with their remarkable gift of memory and of story telling, the Christians themselves became practically living gospels. They recited their story almost exactly as it had been told to them. It was told and retold, many times over. In this way many learned to know the "Jesus-story" and the Christian's sacred books.

The apologetical literature was an heroic attempt to come to terms with the pagan world. It was found necessary to have recourse to spoken and written arguments in defense of the Christian faith. Some of the apologetical literature, addressed to the emperor, probably never reached so high up. But these and other apologies served as an arsenal for Christianity. The Christians in every day conversation with their neighbors and friends had to do quite a good deal of apologetic speaking. One of the great services these apologies did for the Christian community was that they trained an excellent body of Christian defenders of the faith. They could meet the misconceptions and the false accusations right at their source and hinder them from spreading further. They could point out the fallacies in the pagan arguments. It may be that there were some apologies that reached the ears of the emperor, or some other high Roman authorities. It was sure to reach some of the literati of the day. It made them take notice of the growing Christian movement and of its strong position. They came to know that Christianity as a movement was not literarily defenseless. It was producing men able to hold their own even against the ablest and best of their opponents, and it was not afraid of taking up a literary duel with any one of them.

The apologists generally take the same line of argument. The morals of Christianity are purer than those of paganism, and they are for this reason a better protection for the state. Christians have no quarrel with the government, they are loyal subjects. Even if the Christians are unable to pray to the emperor, they always pray for him. They complained that they were condemned unjustly, simply because they admitted they were Christians, and not because they had committed any crime. Christianity did not ask for special privileges; it only asked to be treated justly.

The Greek apologists used to a large extent philosophical arguments. The Latin apologists turned their weapons against injustices done to Christians, and against the accusations of being the enemies of civilization and dangerous to the state. Some of the apologists were conciliatory in attitude and tone and claimed that Christianity had not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Other defenders of the Christian faith were less conciliatory in language and attitude.

Something new had entered into the world. A unique personality had released enormous dynamics. Men and women had something new to talk about and preach about and write about. The dynamic power behind it all was Jesus of Nazareth. More books were written about him--for and against--in the three first centuries of our era than of any other subject.

(4) Informal testimonies and personal solicitations.

"We cannot hesitate to believe, that the great mission of Christianity was in reality accomplished by means of informal missionaries."[153] Harnack was undoubtedly correct in his estimation of the importance of the ordinary Christian church-member in the early Christian movement. Important as the higher officers are for an army, without the rank and file of the trained soldiers, no important advance is made, and no great victory won. The Christian ministry, the medical missionaries, and the apologists were the officers of the army, the ordinary Christians were the rank and file, the trained men.

No one knows the importance of a well trained army better than the officers. The Christian leadership let no opportunity slip by, without impressing upon the Christians their duty of being a missionary church. They were the light of the world and the salt of the earth.[154] They were exhorted to let their light shine before men and not to put their light under a bushel. Mark tells us of a man who had been possessed with a demon, that he, after being healed, wished to accompany Jesus, but Jesus did not permit him: "Go home," he told him, "to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord has done for thee, and how he has had compassion on thee."[155] He was to give his testimony to his friends and in his home. Every Christian, who had experienced the saving grace of Christ, had the same duty laid upon him. Salvation was only half salvation until shared with someone in need thereof. Belief in Christ and confession of Christ were equally necessary for salvation. Paul is very explicit about this when he writes: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."[156]

The Christians were indoctrinated from the very first concerning their duty of confessing Christ and of the awful consequences of denying him before men.[157] Furthermore, the experience of salvation and free grace was such a tremendous experience in their lives, that they could not keep it a secret. They had come in possession of divine life, which they believed was the eternal life, and they must share their experiences with others. By giving their simple testimonies they were doing missionary-propaganda. They spoke straight from their hearts, and their words carried conviction. Those who heard them were gripped by them, and they began to inquire further into this mysterious experience.

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[153] Adolph Harnack, The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), I, 460.

[154] Matt. 5:13, 14. [155] Mark 5:19. [156] Rom. 10:9.

[157] Matt. 10:32, 33.

About the spread of primitive Christianity, Leclercq says:

> The new teaching spread in all the important cities. There were whisperings of the new faith in the streets and in the markets, among the poor men and the slaves, among the women and the female slaves. Women whispered the name of Jesus to their children. "You know," they said, "Jesus is the friend of the poor and the oppressed. He is friend of people like you and me." What slave or what butcher was it, that first spoke to them of Jesus? What missionary had come to them? Most often it was a woman, a slave, a fugitive, no one knew from where. They arrived unknown, and with conviction and burning zeal, they spoke to the women and the children of the gracious heavenly Father, of Jesus and his love, of the indwelling spirit, etc. They taught them prayers and hymns. They distributed spiritual nourishment, which brought strength and cheer to those who heard them.[158]

The primitive Christians literally took to heart the admonition of I Peter: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man, that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."[159] With Paul they also shared the conviction that they were debtors to the non-Christians, and that the time was short.

Examples are not wanting in the New Testament of Christians who in earnest did their share in the great missionary movement. We are told in Acts that a great persecution arose in Jerusalem, and that the Christians were scattered abroad throughout the region of Judea and Samaria, all except the apostles. Those that were thus scattered abroad "went everywhere preaching the word."[160] Some of these Christians gave their informal testimonies in Damascus and Antioch, and did not limit their witnessing to Jews only. They spoke also to Gentiles.

Friend told friend, and humble preachers set forth the good news to eager villagers, until the land was filled with men and women, touched by the new spirit. The ordinary lay-Christian, either by word of mouth, or by intercessory prayer, or by the witness of a good example took his part in the missionary movement of his day. This is not to say that every single individual of the Christian church was an enthusiastic missionary worker. There undoubtedly were some lukewarm Christians, who for one reason or other had not been gripped by the missionary enthusiasm in the primitive Christian church. But these were unquestionably in the minority. All were not fluent speakers, but their beautiful Christian life was a forceful testimony for Christ, a real missionary sermon. Some were lacking in resourcefulness, but they supported some missionary worker,financially and with prayer. Paul appreciated this kind of assistance, and in many of his epistles we find him exhorting believers to pray for him, that he might find an open door for the gospel, or that he might be saved out of the hands of his relentless enemies. All had not received the same charismata and could therefore not be expected to perform the same task. But the Christian church had room for every gift in its missionary work. The leaders of the Christian church were so impressed by the urgency of the work of evangelization and by the possibilities which a unified, well-planned attack of all the Christian forces offered, that they unceasingly instructed their constituency as to how to go about it. The Christians had something to give to the world. It was God's will that every individual Christian should have a share in this work. It was beneficial to the world and it was pleasing to God.

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[158] Henri Leclercq, La vie Chrétienne Primitive (Paris: Rieder, 1928), pp. 17, 18.

[159] I Pet. 3:15.

[160] Acts 8:1, 4.

Christians were not satisfied when they had given their testimony in a general way. They aimed at getting results. They appealed directly to the individual. This gospel is for you. You ought to believe, too. Why don't you come along with me to our next meeting in one of our homes? A farmer, a personal friend in China, was one of our best co-workers. He was illiterate and did not know one character from the other, but he kept on saying to his friends: "Christianity is good! Christianity is good! I cannot explain it. I am illiterate. But you come with me to our chapel, when our pastor comes around, and he will explain it to you." At one meeting seventeen testified that it was through this man's simple testimony that they had become Christians. Men in the first century and men in the twentieth century are not so far apart after all. A simple testimony of what Christ means to me personally, backed up with the mighty testimony of pure, Christian living, impresses people in every age, and land, and clime. The farmer's testimony, free from all technicalities, unsolicited and direct, meant more to other farmers than the words of their foreign pastor.

Christianity thus grew by leaps and bounds. There was something contagious in the Christian movement. One caught it and people in the neighborhood caught it. It was a people's movement. It brought joys into their lives and release to their burdened souls. The slaves found their liberty in Christ, the poor were enriched in Christ, the down-trodden were exalted in Christ, and women and children found in Christ their equality with men. It was, to borrow the famous saying of Lincoln, "a movement of the people, by the people, and for the people."

(5) Preaching and Christian worship.

Preaching and worship are very closely connected in our conception. In fact they are so intimately related one with the other, that when we think of the one we unconsciously connect it up with the other. Preaching is part of our worship, and worship without some kind of exhortation seems to us to be lacking something. Preaching had an important place in Judaism and a still more important place in early Christianity. In Judaism the preaching was chiefly expository. In Christianity this was not lacking, but there preaching tended more to be a spontaneous, authoritative proclamation of the truth in reference to the Lord Jesus, his death, resurrection, and Saviorhood.

At the time of Jesus the distinction between teaching and preaching seems to have been more clear-cut. Jesus was a preacher, "anointed to preach the good tidings to the poor,"[161] but the name given to him more often than any other was "Teacher." His disciples naturally thought of him as their "Teacher," while the common people thought of him as a preacher, as an announcer of good tidings. In our translation of the English New Testament four different Greek words are translated "preaching," or "preach."[162] Preaching was for all who would hear, teaching was more especially designed for disciples. But even in Christ's public utterances teaching is blended with preaching, the one passing easily into the other. Christ's teaching was expository[163] and extemporary. His preaching was the same. He very seldom chose a text and preached from it. His teaching and his preaching were linked to, or occasioned by some question, some remark, some happening, or some act of healing. His teaching and preaching were often interspersed by a parable, or interrupted by a remark by someone. Christ's teaching was in spite of this not haphazard. He had great themes like: the Kingdom of God, God's Fatherly love, humility, ethical teachings, sin, salvation, prayer, et cetera.

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[161] Luke 4:18.

[162] κηρύσσω --proclaim as a herald; καταγγέλλω declare, announce; εὐαγγέλλω tell good tidings; λαλέω talk, discourse.

The apostles put much emphasis on preaching. "We will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word."[164] The serving at the tables interfered with this ministration. The author of Acts has given us a résumé of several sermons by Peter and Paul at various occasions. Paul reminds his readers that the great theme of his preaching has been and was, "Jesus Christ and him crucified."

During the time of the Apostolic fathers preaching was an essential part of their worship.[165] It took the character of a practical exhortation. The sermon was closely connected with the reading of the Scripture. The preacher per se during this period was the bishop.

During the patristic period the preaching was mostly expository. Origen's preaching was so almost exclusively.

The Acts of the Apostles was intended to record how the disciples of Jesus preached the gospel "in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the world.[166] In the Acts, several speeches of the Apostles are given; not in the whole, but as a short résumé. These speeches may be taken as a fair sample of the preaching done in the author's time. It would be too long a digression to discuss here the historical value of the book of the Acts.[167]

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[163] Luke 4:21 ff. [164] Acts 6:2-4.

[165] Jusin Apol. i. 76. [166] Acts 1:8.

[167] Ever since the day of Harnack, German scholarship has tended toward a higher appreciation of the Acts of the Apostles. Hans Lietzmann, "the greatest living New Testament scholar," has this to say: "Not long ago the historical value of the book of Acts was held in very low esteem, and, in consequence of the crit-

We have in the Acts fifteen longer or shorter sermonettes: five of these are ascribed to Peter,[168] (four preached to Jews, and one to Cornelius, a "God-fearer"); one to Stephen (to the Jews)[169] and nine to Paul (of which four are delivered to Jewish audiences, one to Christian church leaders,[170] and four to Gentiles).[171] There is a great variety in these speeches, caused by the individuality of the speakers and the nature of the audience. Peter's sermons were all (except the one to Cornelius) preached to Jews. Cornelius seems to have been so well acquainted with Judaism and Jewish Scripture and reasoning, that Peter made practically the same appeal to him as he did to Jews in general. The only exception seems to have been that he, in the introduction, stressed the fact that with God there is no respect of persons. "In every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted by him."[172]

Peter's addresses in Jerusalem and in Caesarea, and Paul's wermons in the synagogues and to Jewish audiences elsewhere on his missionary journeys, may be termed Messianic. They endeavored to show by the Old Testament prophecies that Jesus was the promised Messiah, that his death and resurrection were foreordained by God and foretold by his prophets in the Old Testament. The resurrection of Jesus appears as a fundamental fact in primitive, Christian preaching. The resurrection of Jesus was to the apostles the sure and irrefutable proof of his Messiahship. The Old Testament prophecies and the resurrection of Jesus from among the dead

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icism of the Tübingen school, was regarded as the product of a tendencious reconstruction of history. Meanwhile opinion has changed fundamentally, and we now know that the author carefully collected what was accessible to him, and that he reproduced his sources with commendable faithfulness, including such as were only fragmentary . . . . The speeches trustworthily reproduce the average opinion of his time and environment." Hans Lietzmann, The Founding of the Church Universal (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), II, 99.

[168] Acts 2:14-36; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 5:29-32; 10:34-43.

[169] Acts 7:2-5

[170] Acts 13:16-41; 22:1-21; 26:2-29; 28:23-29; 20:17-35.

[171] Acts 14:15-18; 17:22-31; 24:10-21; 27:21-26.

[172] Acts 10:34, 35.

seem to have been the two arguments upon which they based most of their appeals to the Jews that Jesus was their promised Messiah. Occasionally they also appealed to the "miracles, wonders, and signs"[173] performed by Jesus during his earthly ministry.

This close connection between the resurrection of Jesus and his Messiahship appears also in the missionary preaching to the Gentiles.[174] The Gentiles, very largely, were without any knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, and the Messianic prophecies. In preaching to a Gentile audience, nothing could be gained by appealing to something they knew nothing about. But that Jesus by his resurrection was proved to be the Son of God and the Savior of men was an argument that appealed to the Gentiles.

In preaching to the Gentiles, i. e., missionary sermons, Paul quoted pagan poets and expounded the philosophy of the Christian religion.[175] To the people of Lystra he used the arguments of natural theology.[176] On the negative side the missionary preaching exposed idolatry, superstition, degrading notions of God, and condemned human sin. The positive elements included the proclamation of Jesus Christ as the Savior of men, and covering his earthly life, his death and resurrection. Other positive elements were: the one true God, future judgment, resurrection of men, love and charity, et cetera.

The opening chapters of the Epistle to the Romans may represent the way in which Paul began his missionary sermons. He attempted first to get his hearers to admit that they were sinners and in need of salvation. Then he led them to the Savior and to his cross, as the power and wisdom of God. The primitive Christian preaching was Christological and Christocentric. There seems to have been one general trend in the missionary sermons to the Gentiles: There is only one God. He is the creator of all things, and of men. Men have forgotten him and turned to idolatry, but God is still giving rain and fruitful years. God has not forsaken man in his degradation. He wants every man and woman to forsake his evil ways and to turn to God. He has sent men a Savior in Jesus Christ. Believe on him. Return to your Father. Your sins will be forgiven.

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[173] Acts 2:22; 10:38.

[174] Acts 17:3; 18:5; I Cor. 15:1-4.

[175] Acts 17:28; Cleanthes of Assos, 300 B. C.

[176] Acts 14:13 ff.

Paul's sermon on Mar's Hill may not in every respect be a representative one, as it was given especially for the sake of disputative philosophers, but it is very instructive as to Paul's approach to that class of men. A beginning is made with an exposition of the true doctrine of God. He is the only God, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, the Creator and Preserver of men. The human race is a unity, with religious capacities. Man has become "ignorant" of God and his relationship to Him. This is to be regretted. But God will overlook it. An era of repentance has dawned by God sending his Son as redeemer and judge. Believe on Jesus who died, but who was raised from the dead, and you will be saved.

There was also what may be styled "congregational preaching." This had for its principal aim the edifying and upbuilding of the church. This type of preaching is represented in Acts by Paul's sermon to the church-leaders at Ephesus. It was in the form of a farewell meeting, and the emotional side of man found expression here. When Christianity became a proscribed religion, it was no longer advisable, nor even possible to preach in public places, as Paul did at Ephesus and in Athens. Then "congregational preaching" and private conversations had to take the place of missionary sermons. Paul relates the enormous impression made by prophecy-speech upon a non-Christian auditor. "But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth."[177] Here we undoubtedly have a real experience described, of the impression made upon an unbeliever, who attended a "congregational preaching"-service. Conversions were by no means unusual even at ordinary "congregational preaching"-services, even though the sermon was of the edifying type, and not of the missionary type.

The Christian worship service followed very closely the synagogue services in Judaism: with reading of the Old and the

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[177] I Cor. 14:24, 25.

New Testament, preaching, singing hymnals of praise, thanksgiving and prayer, and occasional testimonies of ordinary Christian laymen. As long as conditions permitted, everybody was welcome to attend. But during times of persecutions, it became necessary to keep a close lookout for "informers," and to allow only those "outsiders" to attend, who had shown that they were friendly to the movement. It was in this way persecutions hampered the expansion of Christianity. But when Christianity was driven underground and had to worship in the catacombs, and was prevented from doing aggressive missionary work, it still continued to expand. The non-Christians sought out the Christians and had informal conversations with them. When it was impossible to preach to the masses, individual Christians preached Christ in solitary places to one or two. In many hearts the good seed had been sown during intermittent times of religious liberty, and it came to fruition first in times of general or partial persecution. Christian preaching was a mighty weapon in the hands of Christian preachers, and in Christian worship men were brought into the very presence of God.

(6) Concentrating missionary activities in strategical centers.

The primitive Christian missionaries did not waste their strength in minor details or in non-strategical places. They were missionary-statesmen and concentrated their efforts in strategical centers, provincial capitals and great commercial cities. Paul is here, too, a good representative. His zeal to preach Christ, where he was not known before, did not mislead him to go anywhere, or to plan his missionary journeys haphazardly. Every one of his missionary tours took him to new and more important centers which could be used as stepping stones to other strategic places. It is related of Paul that he spent three years in Ephesus, and that he for the space of two years reasoned "daily in the School of Tyrannus," with the result "that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks."[178]

Paul had a whole score of fellow-workers. These he sent out from missionary centers to outlying towns and districts. Paul had never visited Colossae, or Laodicea.[179] But he wrote a letter to both these places: the letter to the Laodiceans may have been lost--some think it is preserved under the name of the Epistle to Philemon--but the letter to the Colossians is preserved in the New Testament. Epaphras, a "fellow-prisoner" and fellow-worker of Paul, had labored in Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis, and probably founded the churches there.[180] Demas and Luke may also have spent some time there.[181] What Paul did at Ephesus he unquestionably did at other centers where he stayed any length of time. About fourscore companions and disciples of Paul are mentioned by name in his epistles and nearly a score more in the book of Acts.[182] A large proportion of them were doubtless his own converts, but some of them had been Christians before him,[183] or had been converted through the labors of other missionaries. Some of these, like Barnabas, were Paul's most intimate co-workers, but of others we know nothing beyond their names.

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[178] Acts 20:31; 19:9, 10.

[179] Col. 2:1; 4:15, 16.

Paul was thus more of a missionary director, sending out missionary workers from well chosen centers. He was a missionary leader, showing by his own zeal and example how to conduct missionary work and sustain missionary fervor. In this way he was able to reduplicate himself many times over and to spread a network of churches on the northern shores of the Mediterranean.

Paul was born in Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, and a great educational center. He evidently spent some time there doing missionary work. It was to Tarsus Barnabas went and brought Paul, as an experienced missionary worker, to Antioch, the capital of Syria. Here Barnabas and Paul worked together for a whole year.[184] It was here Paul first heard the call of the West, and it was from this church he was sent to Cyprus and to the interior of Asia Minor, and later to Macedonia and Greece. In Corinth, the capital and commercial metropolis of the Roman province of Achaia, Paul spent one year and six months. It was the gateway to the west and an important missionary center. In Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province of Asia, Paul spent longer time than in any other city, we know. Paul thus spent considerable time in four provincial capitals and made them, at least three of them, into missionary centers. He spent a short time at Athens, the intellectual capital of the world. Antioch, in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe were important cities in the interior of Asia Minor and missionary centers. Philippi was an important military center, and Thessalonica a great commercial city.

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[180] Col. 4:12-13; Philem. v. 23.

[181] Col. 4:14.

[182] For their names see Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), pp. 423, 424.

[183] For instance, Barnabas, Silas, Apollos, Mark, Audronicus, Junias.

[184] Acts 11:25, 26.

But Paul was not satisfied until he had set foot in the capital of the Empire. He wanted to be an empire builder for Christ. Here at the capital of the mighty Roman Empire he gave his last testimony for Christ. Christ died for him. He lived for Christ and made him known far and wide. Spain was coming more and more into the Roman picture. It constituted the western border of the Roman Empire and in a few years a Spaniard was destined to occupy the throne of Rome. Paul had an inkling of the importance of that distant province and had made his plan accordingly to go there with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Had Paul known the large continent to the west of Spain, he would surely have laid his plan to conquer that too for Christ.

It was the general custom of Paul to speak of the churches in terms of provinces. Thus he speaks of the churches of Asia, of Macedonia, and of Achaia, and it may be assumed that he used the term "Galatia" in the same official sense.[185] When he speaks of the household of Stephanas and of Epaenetus, they are "the first fruits of Achaia and of Asia unto Christ."[186]

When Peter went to Antioch, in Syria, we may be certain that it was because of its strategical importance as a missionary center. And if he ever visited Corinth and Rome, it was undoubtedly due to the same cause. Whoever it was that brought the "good news" to Alexandria, and to Edessa, and Armenia, et cetera, it was for the same purpose to plant Christianity in such centers, from which it might spread the more quickly to surrounding districts.

It was Paul and his companion-apostles and missionaries who, by their tireless effort, brought a knowledge of the gospel to many of the important centers in the Roman Empire and started Christianity on its world-conquering career. It was they who demonstrated the universality of the gospel and its permanent independence of all racial and national limitations.

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[185] I Cor. 16:19; II Cor. 8:1; Rom. 15:26; I Cor. 16:1.

[186] I Cor. 16:15; Rom. 16:5.

Paul's method of concentrating his efforts on the cities was correct and a splendid strategy in the early stages of Christianity. But as time went on, the church was wrong in following the same methods, to the neglect of the rural communities. As a result many rural districts remained practically unevangelized for several centuries.

III. Proofs of Worth

(1) Christian ideals and Christian living.

In our discussion of the missionary methods of early Christianity we have so far dealt with what Christianity as a religion had to offer to the world, and what agencies were employed in its propagation. We are now coming to the third group of missionary methods. Christianity made greater demands upon its followers than any other religion had ever done before, but it had also something better to offer. It was part and parcel of the missionary methods of Christianity to point out to the world the specialties and the excellencies it had to offer, to employ proper and adequate agencies to do this work, and to produce sample proofs of the working out in human lives of Christian principles.

When Paul went up to Jerusalem to discuss with the Christian leaders the necessary requirements for the admission of Gentile believers into the Christian community, he took with him Titus, a Grecian convert.[187] Pointing to Titus, Paul could say to his opponents: "Look here! This is the fruit of Christianity in Gentile lives. This is the kind of men Christianity has regenerated and remade. Are they unworthy of our Christian fellowship?" This presenting of Christian specimen clinched the matter, and Paul easily won his case.

The early Christians had no difficulty in pointing out numerous changed lives of Christians who formerly led a life of immorality and sin. Christ had changed their lives so completely that what they formerly loved, they now hated, and what they formerly hated they now loved. Christianity could lay claim to no greater honor than this, that it could make a bad man good, an impure man pure, et cetera. It sometimes came in for ridicule because of this claim. But the sarcasm ceased when it became known that it was no empty claim. Christianity actually changed men. The God of the Christians had that power, and many living examples were walking in their midst. These were living testimonies to the power of Christ and the excellency of Christianity.

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[187] Gal. 2:1-3.

It could not remain a secret to the non-Christian population, for any length of time, that the Christians had gotten new ideals. Life itself had a new and higher worth and meaning to them. Life was no longer an empty thing. Life was infinitely worthwhile for every man who would make it so. They cherished an ideal of truth and duty. Truth had been the most precious thing in the world, and in all ages has been the one object of search by philosophers, and prophets, and poets, and thinkers. Pilate's old question: "What is truth?" had found a new meaning in Christianity. The Christians became convinced that Christ was the Truth, the Way, and the Life.[188] To know the truth was to the early Christians to know their duty, too. They had something worth living for and worth dying for. Nothing in this universe is so mighty as truth. The Christians believed in the future, they cherished the ideal of progress. The man who despairs of the future is lost to all high endeavor and hopeful living. The world was evil, but Christ had overcome the world. He had come to save the world. Truth was to win the final victory in the world.

A man's life is but the incarnation of his thoughts and ideals. We become like that, which we habitually admire and desire. Men grow into the likeness of the ideals they admire. No man ever became better than his best thoughts of God. In Jesus Christ, the early Christians saw the ideal of life, as lived by Jesus. And by looking unto Jesus, as their Lord and Master, their own lives became transformed into the same image from glory to glory.[189] The Christians had gotten new ideals of life, of truth, of duty, and of the possibilities of man and the future progress. In Christ Jesus they saw their ideal personified. He was their Lord and Master. He was their Example and their Goal. They meditated on him, they looked upon him, and unconsciously to themselves their lives were transformed. They became loving and kind and true and hopeful. Life Moses coming down from the mountain, not knowing that his face had undergone a transformation, these Christians did not know what transformation was going on in their own lives, but their neighbors and their friends noticed it. They were "in Christ" and Christ was "in" them.

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[188] John 14:6. [189] II Cor. 3:18.

The ideals these Christians lived with and loved so much were somewhat intangible to the outside world. They could admire them, when adequately expressed, but they could not handle them with their hands and see them with their eyes. But what they could see and understand was the changed life of the Christians. This was a constant reminder to them of a new power that had come into their midst. They saw the fruits of Christianity, and in their better moments, at least, they felt a yearning for the same power in their own lives. Many pagans saw Christianity in actual living long before they knew anything of its doctrinal tenets. It was their first contact with Christianity. They saw Christianity in action, but what they could not know was the dynamic, transforming power.

When the Christian preacher came around and proclaimed the "good news" of Jesus Christ it dawned upon them: "These men must be Christians." Sure enough they were. They had seen the fruit of Christianity, but they did not know anything about the tree upon which this fruit had grown, neither had they tasted it themselves. During times of severe persecutions many a man and many a woman learned to their dismay, that their most trusted slaves or officials were Christians. They tried to save them from a cruel death, but it was impossible to do anything for them when they openly confessed their faith in Christ.

It was the changed life of Christians that finally, more than anything else, made Christianity victorious in the Roman Empire. The silent testimony of a changed life is irresistible. It became impossible to believe any of the atrocities of which the Christians were accused, when they saw their good deeds and their clean, moral life, which they led.

Men are able to admire a beautiful Christian life, even when they themselves hate the man that lives it, because it is a condemnation of their own immoral lives. Many a time they longed for such a life themselves. Ill-health and ill-fortune, the passing away of a loved one, or the emptiness of life, may at a certain moment of their lives, have made them seek for the new life, which they knew could be found only in Christ. Jesus Christ was the Savior of men. A broken life and a broken heart he could heal. He could remake man. He could give to man new ideals and a new outlook in life. He could make man a new creature.

(2) Christian fortitude and Christian forgiveness.

Fortitude was one of the virtues admired by the Graeco-Roman world. It was admired no less by the Christians themselves. It was during the pagan persecutions of the Christians, that the virtues of fortitude and forgiveness came especially to the fore and were most noticeable. The judgment-proceedings and the executions generally took place in the market place, in the amphitheater, or the arena, with thousands of listeners and onlookers. All admired fortitude, even in an otherwise despised Christian. Fortitude was therefore the best way of meeting suffering, torture, death, and the unavoidable. A courageous martyr was admired by all, friends and foes alike. Forgiveness was not considered of equal importance and value. It was a rather rare flower in the pagan world. To show forgiveness was considered as bordering on weakness. But it dawned upon the people gradually that it was easier to show fortitude in an emergency than to forgive an injustice or an enemy; and then the one who could do it, became more respected. The pagans generally felt that to bear no grudge to an enemy and to seek no "sweet revenge," was more than they could come out with.

Both of these virtues became public spectacles in times of severe persecutions. It was the fortitude of the martyrs that became the admiration of all. But it was exhibited no less by some of their friends, who in face of imminent death, encouraged their Christian friends to endure suffering for a short while and remain loyal to Christ. The tortures and torments of the Christian martyrs, as shown by description and by pictures by Father Gallonio[190] are almost unbelievable. Such ingenious and devilish tortures, it seems almost unthinkable, that one human being would inflict upon another. The Christian community generally attended the public executions in full strength and saw all these torments inflicted upon their friends and fellow-believers, and still they never attempted to take revenge or revolt against such an inhuman government. The Christians counted it an honor to suffer for Christ. And in his name and by his strength they were enabled to forgive their tormentors and pray for their enemies.

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[190] Antonio Gallonio, De SS. Martyrum Cruciatibus, translated by A. R. Allinson (Paris: The Fortune Press, 1903).

It would seem that most of the executions took place in public, whether it was burning, decapitation, or fighting an uneven fight with wild animals. The judgment-proceedings were also generally held in the open. Thousands of people got their first impressions of Christianity at these judgment scenes, when the Christians courageously confessed their faith and reiterated their loyalty to Christ over and over again. They insisted that they were loyal subjects of the emperor, but as he was only a man, they could only pray for him, but not worship him.

The testimonies by the martyrs, their fortitude and loyalty to Christ in face of a cruel death did much for the expansion of Christianity. Justin Martyr was much impressed by the heroism of the martyrs.[191] Examples are not wanting of many that were so impressed by the heroism exhibited, that they there and then confessed Christ and became martyrs, too. The Christians, brought before the Roman judgment seat, generally gave a full account of their faith and of their God and their Savior. Often they had occasion to speak to tens of thousands. Persecution itself became the very best advertisement of Christianity. It served as a constant reminder to the people of the Christian religion and of the Christians. The State took upon itself to make Christianity known, where it was unknown before, by occasional edicts of warning and suppression. What the Christians could not do themselves, due to their limited resources, the State did for them on a large scale. By edicts of proscription, public criminal proceedings, and public executions, the State did not let the people forget the Christian religion. Those who had not been interested in Christianity before began to make inquiry about it. Why was it that Christianity of all the religions in the Roman Empire was persecuted? Why did they condemn the Christians simply because they were Christians and released them as soon as they apostatized? Why did not the authorities make a thorough investigation as to their alleged crimes, as they did in other cases?

The cruel tortures and inhuman torments aroused sympathy for the Christians in some circles. Others were impressed by a religion that gave to its followers such a joy and peace in the midst of all the sufferings human ingenuity could invent. People were thirsting for a religion that would bring peace to their souls and hope for the future. A religion that was worth dying for, and to die rejoicingly, seemed to many as something worth having. And so it was that "the blood of the Christians became the seed of the church."[192] It finally became clear even to the State that persecution was not only unable to check Christianity, but that it was a most potent means of its extension. The direct result of the persecutions, in form of Christian converts, may not have been so great as sometimes made out, but the indirect result in form of making Christianity known everywhere, in arousing public opinion, and in preparing the soil for the final triumph, cannot be overestimated.

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[191] Justin, Dialogue of Justin with Trypho, a Jew, chaps. ii-viii.

The Christians' love for their enemies and their forgiveness of gross injustices was something unheard of. In the latter part of the third century and the beginning of the fourth, Christianity had achieved majority in some places and was a large minority in very many places, with a very strong organization. It would have been an easy matter to rise in revolt and take revenge upon their tormentors, but as far as it is known, they did not even attempt such a thing. They were loyal subjects to the Roman Emperor. Christ had taught them to pray for those that illtreat them, to love their enemies and to do good to those that curse them.[193] The hardest thing for even a Christian to do is to forgive an enemy. But Christ did so. He prayed for those responsible for nailing him to the cross. Christ never asked his followers to do anything he was not willing to do himself. When Chiang Kai-shek forgave his enemies, who had revolted against him, he really started something new in the political life of China. But he went even further. He trusted them as friends and gave them responsible positions, where they would have had a chance to revolt again, if they had so desired. No one in China has ever dared to go so far in applying Christian principles. And these principles have worked. The former enemies are today his best friends and his strongest supporters. The principles of Christ worked in the Roman Empire many centuries ago, and they work in China today, and in every place where they are consistently and faithfully applied.

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[192] Tertullian Apology. 50. [193] Matt. 5:44.

(3) Christian love and Christian philanthropy.

The greatest thing in Christianity is love. God is love. It is his nature, just as it is the nature of the sun to give heat and light and stimulate life. The greatest commandment of the law is love: love to God and to one's neighbor. The new commandment of Jesus has to do with love;[194] and he lifts love to a higher level when he adds: "as I have loved you." The model of Christian love is Christ. He is also the motive power of Christian love. The pagans could not but feel that something new had entered into the lives of the Christians. They used at best to live a life of selfishness and disinterestedness, but after hearing the "good news" and joining the Christian Church, a new love took possession of them. This love manifested itself in the brotherhood, in the home, in the community, and to all men. He who formerly had no neighbors in the Christian sense of the word, saw now a neighbor in every human being he met, and who needed his assistance. His former Cain-attitude: "Am I my brother's keeper?"[195] had disappeared at once.

Love for selfish ends the pagans knew. But unselfish, self-sacrificing, all-embracing love, such a thing had hardly entered their minds. As an ideal it might be all right, but as a practical thing it was impossible. But now the Christians had come and begun to put the impossible theories into practice. And it seemed to come so natural, without any effort. A new dynamic had entered their lives and this dynamic was the love of Christ. The love of Christ constrained them to do the impossible, to love the unlovable, the selfish, the cruel, the persecutors, yea, their very enemies. Since they met Christ, personality had risen in value. Christ loved men and died for them. Now they looked at men with the eyes of Christ. Christ had made them their brother's keeper. /They were by no means perfect, but they made praiseworthy attempts, and set an outstanding example in society.

They had something which their fellowmen did not have. This made them unlike others in their behavior and in their attitudes. Brotherly love was especially noticeable. They themselves were "in Christ," and all those who were "in Christ" became the object of their special love. But it could not be confined to this small circle. It broke the walls and flooded the whole community, the whole province, the whole land. It included the poor, the unfortunate, the sick, in short, all sorts and conditions of men. True love does not consist of words only. It is activity. It seeks the objects of its love. The mother-love seeks the sick child, the Good Samaritan, the wounded ones by the roadside, the Good Shepherd, the lost sheep. It is in this way philanthropy begins. Philanthropy is the love of man in action, exemplified in deeds.

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[194] John 13:34. [195] Gen. 4:9.

Philanthropy, like benevolence, begins at home. Christian benevolence was no exception. In a world as large and as small as ours, we cannot reach all, we cannot help all. Our neighbor is the one we meet on our way and whom we are in position to help. The same idea is expressed in the Master's words, when he spoke of the great judgment scene:

> I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to see me . . . . Inasmuch as you did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me.[196]

These words of Jesus have exerted a powerful influence upon every generation in the Christian Church, and they are at the bottom of all Christian philanthropy. This is the gospel of love and charity. Christ suffers in his brethren, and as he has so many brethren and has greater love than anyone else, he is in reality the greatest Sufferer of all. What is done to relieve the sufferings of "one of the least of these my brethren" is done unto me. Here we have the Christian dynamic of all Christian philanthropy. It is so dear to the heart of the Master, that he considers it as done to himself. His brethren are so precious to Christ, that what is done to the least of them is done to Christ himself.

The gospel thus became a social message of love and good deeds. The philanthropy in the early Christian church took on a variety of forms. We cannot do more than simply mention the most outstanding ones. The Christian church supported the officials of the church, the widows and the orphans, the sick, the infirm, and the disabled; it cared for prisoners and people condemned to the mines, for poor people needing burial, for those visited by great calamities and for slaves; it furnished work for those in need of it, and hospitality for brethren on a journey, and assisted weaker churches in poverty or peril. Besides, private almsgiving was also practiced. The children of Christian martyrs were a special charge of the church. Lactantius adduces this argument: "God commands them to be cared for, in order that no one may be hindered from going to his death for righteousness' sake on the plea of regard for his dear children."[197] This extensive philanthropy going on within the brotherhood and its borderlands, could not but attract the attention of the pagans. But this kind of philanthropy was not unknown in the Graeco-Roman world. All the other religious brotherhoods in the Empire did the same in particular cases and on a smaller scale.

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[196] Matt. 25:35-37, 40.

But the Christians extended their philanthropy and their loving services far beyond their own group. They did social service in the name of Christ, to the pagans themselves. Let us illustrate this by citing a few examples. When the plague raged in Alexandria, about 259 A. D., bishop Dionysius wrote:

> The most of our brethren did not spare themselves, so great was their brotherly affection. They held fast to each other, visited the sick, without fear, ministered to them assiduously, and served them for the sake of Christ. Right gladly did they perish with them . . . . Indeed many did die after caring for the sick and giving health to others, transplanting the death of others, as it were to themselves. In this way the noblest of our brethren died, including some presbyters and deacons of the highest reputation . . . . Quite the reverse was it with the heathen. They abandoned those who began to sicken, fled from their dearest friends, threw out the sick when half dead into the streets, and let the dead lie unburied.[198]

The presence of calamity of any kind was sufficient to call forth the charitable activities of Christians. Pontianus, the biographer of the famous African bishop Cyprian (close of second century A. D.) gives an example of how he trained the people of his diocese in time of plague:

> The people being assembled together, he first of all urges on them the benefits of mercy. By means of examples drawn from the sacred lessons, he teaches them . . . . . Then he proceeds to add that there is nothing remarkable in cherishing merely our own people with the due attentions of love, but that one might become perfect, who should do something more than heathen men or publicans, one who, overcoming evil with good, and practicing a merciful kindness like to that of God, should

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[197] Lactantius Instit. vi. 12.

[198] Euseb. H. E. vii. 22; cf. Harnack, Expansion of Christianity, op. cit., p. 212.

> love his enemies as well . . . . . The contributions are always distributed then according to the degree of the men and of their respective ranks . . . . . Thus the good done was done to all men, and not merely to the household of faith, so richly did the good works overflow.[199]

The same story of practical sympathy and self-denying love by Christians to outsiders appears again during the reign of Maximinus Daza:

> Then did they show themselves to the heathen in the clearest light. For the Christians were the only people who, amid such terrible ills showed their fellow-feeling and humanity by their actions. Day after day some would busy themselves with attending to the dead and burying them (for there were numbers to whom no one else paid any heed); others gathered in one spot all who were afflicted by hunger, throughout the whole city, and gave bread to them all. When this became known, people glorified the Christians' God, and convinced by the very facts, confessed the Christians alone were truly pious and religious.[200]

Christian love and Christian philanthropy were something extraneous to the Roman world. They had entered the empire in company with the Christian religion. They were a fruit of Christianity. There they thrived and nowhere else. It was known to all and could not be denied. A bad tree cannot bear good fruit; therefore if the fruit was good the tree, which had produced it, must be good. "Here are the sample-proofs, here are the evidences. What more do you need? What Christ has done for others, He can do for you. Believe and be saved."

(4) Christian character and Christian virtues.

James Martineau has said

> that there are three kinds of human distinctions: some men are eminent for what they possess; some for what they achieve; others for what they are. Having, Doing, and Being constitute the three great distinctions of mankind, and the three functions of their life.[201]

The early Christians were not noted for what they possessed. In fact they owned very little of this earth's goods. Not very many of them achieved any great fame in their own age. Many of them have achieved fame in later ages, for what they were, for their Christian character, and for their virtuous living. A Christian character is man's most precious possession. Like wisdom and experience, character is not inherited, neither can it be received as a full-fledged gift from God. God supplies us with the necessary material, but it has to be created by one's own efforts. We begin life innocent; we become either sinful or holy. We begin life weak and ignorant, a bare possibility; we create either a good character or a bad one. We are ~~given a~~ name at birth, but we make the worth of our name ourselves. A Christian character is the result of our choices, the weight of our personality, the thing that we have made ourselves in the school of Christ and under his instruction. Character, like godliness, is profitable for the life that now is, and it contains a promise for the life that is to come. We take our character with us, wherever we go, in time or eternity.

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[199] Pontianus *Vita*. ix. f; cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

[200] Euseb. *H. E.* ix. 8.

[201] Samuel Zane Batten, *The New Citizenship* (Philadelphia: The American Sunday School Union, 1928), p. 284.

The primitive Christians were known for their Christian character. They were unlike the rest of mankind. They were called Christians, by those outside the Christian fold, because they talked of Christ and imitated Christ and lived for Christ. A Christian character was a new creation, a beautiful and fragrant flower transplanted upon new shores and in new climes. It was a many-hued flower. It contained some of the colors loved and admired from time immemorial, but with an addition of many new ones. The masterly blending of the new and the old colors made it the most perfect rose ever seen. The climate was not exactly favorable, but it grew in spite of frost and chilly winds. And, like the flowers that grow in a northern climate, where they have to wage a continual struggle with an unfavorable environment, this flower had an added fragrance.

Many elements go to make up the Christian character. In early Christianity these elements were:- loyalty to God and to Christ, loyalty to their government which they believed was from God, and loyalty to their friends. Christians were honest and could be depended upon. They could not be bought. They had strong convictions, and they were not for sale. They were kind and neighborly, friendly and loving. They were conscientious and just, pure and sincere. They lived in the world, but were not of the world. They hated oppression and wickedness and all kinds of immoralities, in short, everything they thought was harmful to man and displeasing to God. They were always considerate, and neighborly, and helpful, but they could not be persuaded to partake in any doings which smacked of idolatry, nor could they be made to worship any thing as God.

A character of this type was both liked and disliked. The best men and women in society could appreciate a character like that, while the baser type of society disliked their separating themselves from the rest of the community and refusing to take part in their performances. But the more Christians became known, the better they were understood, and the more they gained in favor. Even their pagan neighbors could admire a man or a woman who had courage to stand up, and stand alone, for what was thought to be honorable and right. It required great moral courage to go against public opinion and to be the object of ridicule and sneer. But in fellowship with one another and in communion with God, they renewed their strength from day to day and were enabled not only to be patient with their lot in life, but to transfigure it and make it glorious.

A Christian character is formed in the stress and strain of this world. It is not something added to life, it is the harmonious development of the soul in all its powers and faculties. It can best be promoted through loving service of our fellowmen, and the faithful fulfilment of our duties. The early Christians were not forever seeking to cultivate their spiritual stature. They were trying to do the will of their Master, in loving service for their fellowmen. It was in this service that their Christian character grew. Hardship and persecution only made it more Christ-like and beautiful.

The world has made much of the active virtues of life; it has admired the forceful, the impetuous, the daring, the self-confident. Jesus Christ, the Master in virtue, makes much of what may be called the passive virtues. He commends and blesses the graces of humility, contentment, patience, and forgiveness. Christianity shows its preëminence in the balance it maintains in life in making excellence of character consist in the harmonious combination of many forms of virtue. Harmony in music is the happy blending of many tones and not the monotonous repetition of one note.

Different ages and different peoples have cherished different opinions of what constitutes greatness. Among the Greeks, he was the great man who possessed beauty of body and strength of limb, and could handle the sword and spear skillfully and never turned back to the foe. Among the Romans the ideal hero was the military leader who had braved the hardships of war, crushed his enemies, and conquered new territories for Rome. Among the ancient Saxons and Scandinavians the chief glory of man consisted in warlike achievements on the battlefied. Among them it was counted a reproach to reach old age and die of some disease. Today the warlike, the strong, the forceful, the dashing, the successful receive a large share of public praise and admiration. Christianity takes issue with the whole world on the question of what constitutes human greatness and perfection. To do and dare is with the world a sign of courage and greatness; to bear and suffer is the mark of Christian worth. The doctrine of the cross is the proclamation of a new law of life and a new kind of glory. To paganism, the most ignoble service in life was burden-bearing and suffering. To Christianity the service of suffering and burden-bearing is of all others the noblest and divinest. Overemphasis is always wrong. Christianity teaches us to see that the active and the passive forms of virtue are the complement the one of the other. A man all meekness and patience and forgiveness is a poor specimen of Christian virtue. On the other hand, a man all energy and force and enthusiasm lacks some of the necessary graces of Christian character. Bearing and suffering are as much a part of life as doing and daring.

All through the so-called "Sermon on the Mount," the Master shows the importance and place of the passive virtues. It opens with a series of beatitudes on character. The efficiency of the passive virtues in society cannot well be overestimated. More things are wrought by patient continuance in well-doing and humble contentment with life than this world supposes. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, to conquer the world for God, and to bring in his kingdom. And he does this work, not by the might of air power, fleets or armies, but by the gentleness of love and the power of his cross. Nothing disarms opposition like gentleness, as nothing conquers hate like love. "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that does serve."[202]

Humility lies at the root of all that is great and fine in Christian character. No character can build very high that has not its foundations laid deep in the virtue of humility. Keeping oneself in the background, rejoicing when others are honored, stepping aside to make place for another, that is what humility means in actual life. "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."[203] There can be no Christian greatness where humility is not.

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[202] Luke 22:26.

Contentment is at once a Christian virtue and a Christian duty. More than once in Scripture we are admonished to be content with such things as we have. "Godliness with contentment," we are told, "is great gain."[204] Two things are the direct opposites of contentment, namely, worry and ambition.

Patience, in the estimation of some, is a mere drudge among the virtues and servile in character. By others it is "the touchstone of our virtues." "The peculiarity of ill-temper," says Professor Drummond, "is that it is the vice of the virtuous."[205] It is often the one blot on an otherwise noble character. We have known men and women who would have been almost perfect, had it not been for an easily ruffled, quick-tempered or touchy disposition. Patience is the one virtue which most truly betokens strength of character. It is not always easy for a man, whose soul is a flaming passion for righteousness and truth, to be calm and patient. The man who is sure of himself and sure of his cause is the man who is most patient and calm.

The great virtues of the Christian life are: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance, justice, generosity, forbearance, forgiveness, truthfulness. These are the virtues honored everywhere in the New Testament. These are the virtues so necessary in human relationship and social adjustment.

Christian men and women, in possession of a character in which the active and passive virtues were harmoniously blended, were a strange thing, even in the Roman Empire, where strange things from East and West had their rendezvous. They were sometimes referred to as the "third race," and most assuredly they were a distinct people. They possessed strength and courage to suffer and die for their convictions, and they were so virtuous that they could do it patiently, forgivingly, lovingly.

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[203] Matt. 18:4.

[204] I Tim. 6:8.

[205] Samuel Zane Batten, The New Citizenship, op. cit., p. 163.

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